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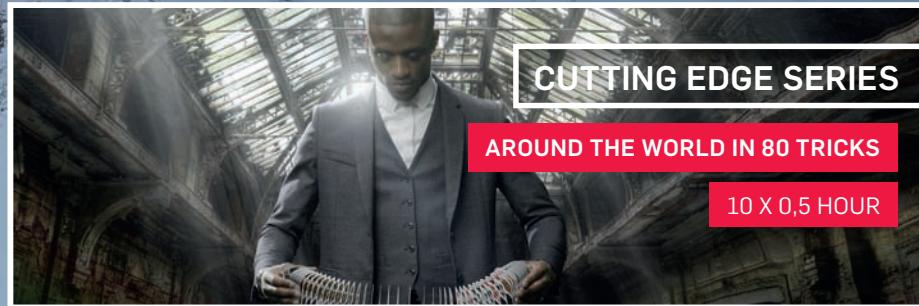
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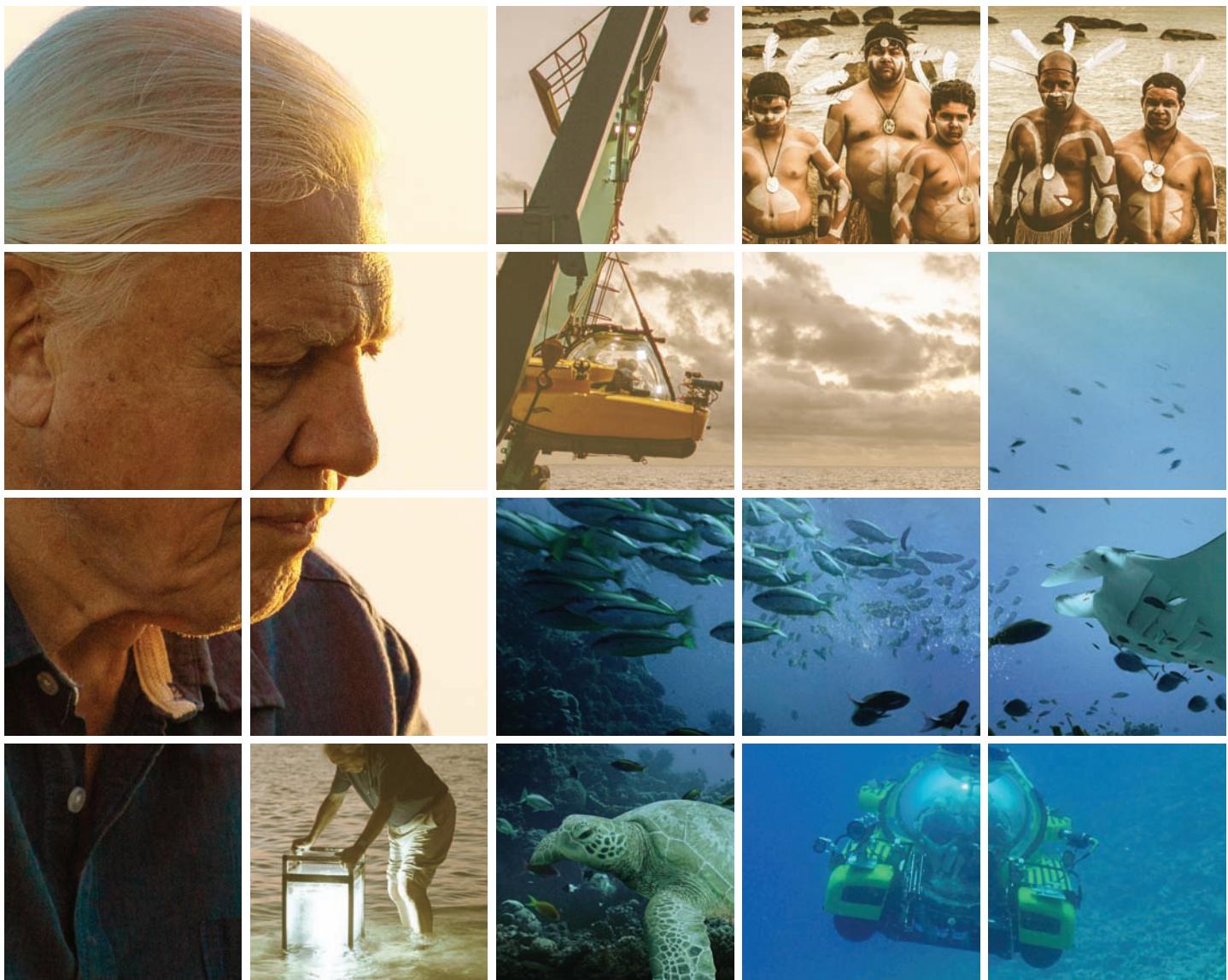


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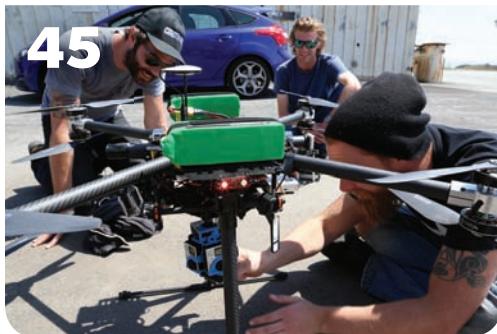
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on the cover

A Florida Panther from the National Geographic Photo Ark, as projected on to the Empire State Building in a scene from the upcoming documentary *Racing Extinction*, airing on Discovery Channel in December. Photo: Joshua Brott/Obscura Digital.

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Grrrr... expect to see more of this guy on the Croisette in Cannes, in the form of one of our MIPCOM Picks.

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SEARCHING FOR SOLUTIONS

If you happened to hear what sounded like a giant “Ahhhhh” emanating from somewhere unknown last month, don’t fret – you weren’t alone. It turns out that it was simply a collective sigh of relief from the cable television industry.

The exhalation was most probably prompted by a study released during the International Broadcasting Conference from “entertainment discovery” technology company Rovi Corporation. According to their online survey of over 4,000 pay-TV and OTT content subscribers in the U.S., Europe and Asia, while 57% of all respondents had given cord cutting either “a lot of thought” or “some thought,” the number of cord cutters among U.S. respondents weighed in at a mere 7%.

For cable and pay-TV operators in Germany, France, China and India, the news was even better, with only 2% of respondents saying they did the deed.

With the next series of numbers I’ll put forward from the survey, it’s important to keep in mind that the polling was done by a company that specializes in metadata, search/navigation and entertainment recommendation technology. Still, given the robust search capabilities available via web platforms for people wanting specific content, it’s worth noting.

According to the Rovi survey, 67% of all respondents said they would “be likely to extend their [cable or pay-TV] contract, upgrade their service, or sign up with a provider if they offered better search or recommendations.” Also, 51% said that the onus should be on content providers to make it “easier and more effective to search for shows.” The overwhelming majority of respondents – 73% – said they are “extremely” or “somewhat” frustrated when they can’t find “enjoyable content.”

While the results don’t reveal what viewers regard as “enjoyable content,” they do point towards the increasing importance of what Michael Hawkey, senior vice president and “general manager of discovery” at Rovi, calls “advanced usability” – search, recommendation and voice-enabled interactivity that helps viewers navigate the wilds of their cable bundles.

The conclusion reached by Rovi’s survey had a tinge of optimism – at present, cord cutting is “all talk” – and perhaps the solution to stemming the tide of tuning out is talk as well, in the form of talking to your TV. In Apple’s announcement concerning the new-and-improved Apple TV, made days before Rovi’s survey findings were made public, the company said the new remote for its system would feature its voice command system Siri, allowing viewers to use their voices to search for shows and movies across multiple content providers simultaneously.

The more cynical among us of a certain age (myself included) might be tempted to recall with a shudder how arduous it was to have to consult our local newspaper to find out what was on the telly. Dark days indeed.

Still, in a world with a gazillion channels at our fingertips, perhaps it is too much to ask today’s audience to handle the task of finding content they want to watch on their own. And maybe giving viewers more opportunity and capabilities to find programs they may be keen to discover – perhaps *your* program – isn’t such a crazy idea.

Cheers,
Barry Walsh
Editor and content director
realscreen

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IN WITH THE NEW

I am thrilled to introduce you to a few new faces at *realscreen*.

Carrie Gillis joins us as associate publisher, replacing Melissa Giddens who left this summer to head up biz dev for Jingle Punks in Canada. Carrie was most recently the associate publisher for an award-winning Toronto-based entertainment weekly. Prior to that, I worked with her on *realscreen*'s sister publication *Strategy*. That range of experience, coupled with Carrie's turn as a senior sales executive for CBC International Sales and as a sales exec for Télé Images International, gives me complete confidence that she will excel in this role.

Carrie will oversee the sales team of Kerry Lanctot, who returned to the fold after a stint of four years at home with her daughter, and Kristen Skinner, who joins us after a year of exemplary performance in the event sales department, taking care of many registrants to the Summit, *Realscreen West* and *Realscreen London*.



Gillis



Alcinii



Lanctot



Skinner

Dan Alcinii joined the editorial team as staff writer just before *Realscreen West* and will be reporting alongside Barry and Manori at *Realscreen London* and at *MIPCOM*. Dan comes to *realscreen* with a wealth of experience at various media outlets as a journalist and videographer.

So with our fresh faces in tow, we look forward to welcoming you to *Realscreen London* at the Marriott Grosvenor Square Hotel. Sincere thanks to the advisory board who provided invaluable input to editor and content director Barry Walsh and conference producer Tiffany Rushton with respect to programming: **Pierre Brogan**, CAA; **Jo Clinton-Davis**, controller, factual, ITV; **Sean Cohan**, EVP international, A + E Networks; **Dee Forbes**, president and MD, Northern Europe, Discovery Networks; **Stephen Lambert**, chairman, All3Media America/CEO, Studio Lambert; **Debbie Manners**, managing director, Keo Films; **Sally Miles**, founder and CEO, Passion Distribution; **Charlotte Moore**, controller, BBC One; **Tim Mutimer**, CEO, Zodiak Rights; and **Michael Smith**, general manager, Cooking Channel.

'Til next time, go well
Claire Macdonald
VP & Publisher
realscreen

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Charlie Collier
President & General
Manager
AMC / SundanceTV

Keynote Address: Charlie Collier, AMC and Sundance TV

As President of AMC and SundanceTV, Charlie Collier oversees the creative and business operations of both networks. He joined AMC as General Manager in 2006 and was promoted to President in 2008; he was named to the SundanceTV post in April 2015. In this opening keynote address, Collier will talk about television today, taking risks and creating shows of distinction that attract and serve passionate audiences.

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John Morayniss
CEO
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Keynote Conversation: John Morayniss, CEO, eOne Television

John Morayniss, CEO of eOne Television, oversees all aspects of eOne Television's activities as well as the strategic growth of eOne's television business. The company's portfolio of original and third-party acquired content now consists of over 35 series and long-form programs commissioned by over 20 different broadcast and cable networks, including the mega-hit *The Walking Dead* and its companion series *Fear The Walking Dead*, *Hell On Wheels*, *Into The Badlands*, *Rookie Blue*, *Bitten*, *Rogue*, *Klondike* and *The Book of Negroes*. In a live interview with The Huffington Post's Roy Sekoff, Morayniss will speak to creativity, opportunity and his vision for eOne Television's global content business.

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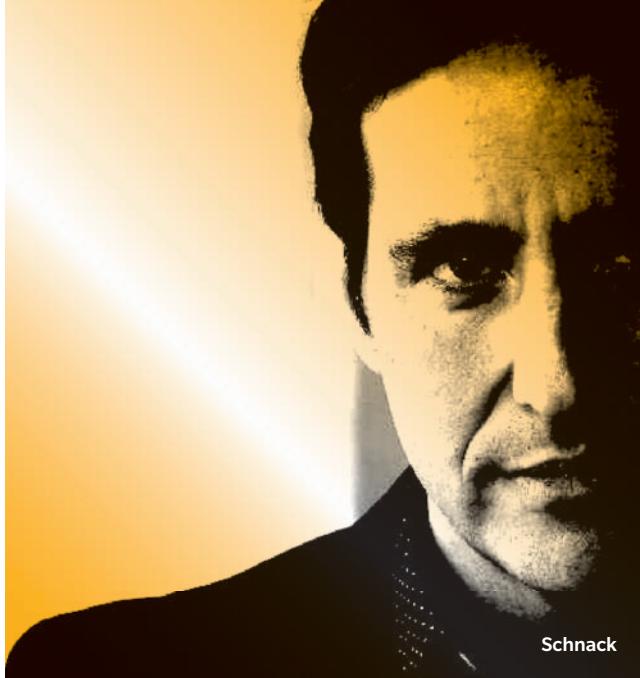
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Schnack



Cook



Poitras

Honing the field of vision

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

A “filmmaker-driven” documentary unit formed by *Citizenfour* director Laura Poitras, AJ Schnack and Charlotte Cook is causing much excitement in the doc world.

Established to pair docmakers with ongoing news stories, Field of Vision will commission and create 40 to 50 original episodic and one-off short-form, non-fiction films in collaboration with news site The Intercept – the news site Poitras launched last year with journalists Glenn Greenwald and Jeremy Scahill – and First Look Media.

The unit launched at the 53rd annual New York Film Festival on September 27 with the world premiere of Poitras’ *Asylum*, a series about WikiLeaks founder Julian Assange, as well as a selection of original work commissioned by Field of Vision.

The first season became available online two days later via the Field of Vision site and The Intercept. Films will debut weekly until November and a second season will begin in 2016.

The docs will also be distributed through other platforms, including film festivals, streaming sites and cable TV.

“Our goal with Field of Vision is to create a platform that responds quickly to the world around us, tells great stories with images, and encourages artistic risk taking with a fast production cycle,” Poitras said in a statement. “In building Field of Vision, AJ, Charlotte and I are inspired by past examples such as *World in Action* and *Life* magazine.”

“This is an exciting moment in documentary storytelling,” added Schnack. “By providing an outlet for

filmmakers to create both episodic and short-form films and by giving them the resources they need to produce original and innovative work, Field of Vision will expand visual storytelling in the digital age, while responding to unfolding events in real time.”

The first two seasons will feature new works by Kirsten Johnson, Heloisa Passos, Iva Radivojevic, Michael Moore, Shola Lynch, Yung Chang, Michael Palmieri and Donal Mosher, Beau Willimon, Dustin Guy Defa, Jarred Altermann, Jill Magid, Katie Galloway and Kelly Duane de la Vega, among others.

Poitras’s feature doc about National Security Agency whistleblower Edward Snowden, *Citizenfour*, cleaned up on the awards circuit earlier this year. The film won the Academy Award for best documentary as well as BAFTA and Director’s Guild of America awards.

Schnack is an independent filmmaker whose credits include the films *Caucus* and *Gigantic (A Tale of Two Johns)*, as well as the Al Jazeera America doc series *Midterms*.

Cook spent the past four years as the director of programming for Toronto-based film festival Hot Docs. In May, she announced she was leaving the organization for an opportunity “at the intersection of documentary film production and curation.”



POINTED ARROW: A Producer's Perspective

BY JOHN SMITHSON

A reported US\$7 million an episode to make a factual series is a tasty proposition.

It's seduced indies from the non-scripted world into a game of fantasy producer, as they to dare to imagine just how they would spend such a princely sum.

It's no question that the estimated \$250 million commission by Amazon for three series of the new car show by the former *Top Gear* team is a turning point in TV. When billionaire Amazon boss Jeff Bezos describes it as "a very, very, very expensive deal", then you know we're playing for high stakes here.

All credit to the BBC escapees. The *Top Gear* crew created memorable TV with global appeal. Clarkson, Hammond and May are a fantastic on-screen trio and total respect must go to their genius producer Andy Willman, who surely now must be among the best rewarded factual producers anywhere in the world.

All eyes are on the upcoming battle of the car shows. Can the BBC's reworked *Top Gear* hold on to the amazing success of the Clarkson era? Or will the new Amazon Prime show be able to clone their winning formula?

Don't write off the BBC show. Although the budget will be a fraction of the Amazon show, it's hired a smart talent in Chris Evans to front it and the power of the brand may get the millions of free-to-air viewers to stay loyal.

But there's more to this than competition between two rival shows. It's a turning point, because now the era of super premium factual has arrived.

The global aspirations of the major SVOD players have long threatened to blow the entire TV model apart. Their desire to attract new subscribers, and to satiate them with hours of

binge-viewing, not only brings new players with deep pockets to the market, but also changes how the established networks face the challenge.

For those of us whose job involves casting a beady eye over the ever-changing market, searching for opportunities, what does it all mean?

We are in the beginning stages of a significant reboot. The established nets are seeking to beat the SVOD gate crashers at their own game.

As producers get ready for the post-summer round of markets, be prepared for seismic shifts in what your network

customers are looking for.

Who will scoop up this super premium work? It's clearly going to be tough for emerging talent and newer companies. Talent, track record and experience are important, but nothing trumps a killer idea.

So will the big companies, who are likely to be part of the big consolidators, scoop up most of the rich pickings? It's

believed Netflix has already been approaching some of the major UK groups. But it's possible the business affairs models of the SVOD giants may scare off these big, IP-focused companies.

It's also a challenge for the super successful U.S. companies who've flourished and often sold for big money by producing long-running, structured reality hits for the networks. Can they adapt their creative flair to this new world of the super premium?

We are already seeing the impact in the world of theatrical docs, where both the SVOD operators and now the broadcast networks are circling around festivals such as Sundance to pick up the hit films before they even reach cinemas.

What's both truly exciting, and equally scary, is the speed in which these super premium ideas can get greenlit.

Networks are making focused, marketing-driven decisions. An idea with a snappy title, a compelling two-page outline and an A-list talent, in front or behind the camera, can happen in weeks. These are commissions that can dramatically change the fortunes of any indie.

But as factual goes higher up the budget/ambition ladder, the same risks that apply to the world of scripted also come in to play here. Thus, lots of ideas will be considered, many put into expensive development, but few will be picked up.

Still, even though the odds are stacked against you, it's too much of an opportunity for any producer to ignore. There's such a voracious appetite for the super premium that surely it's worth a go.

As producers get ready for the post-summer round of markets, be prepared for seismic shifts in what networks are looking for.

John Smithson is creative director of Arrow Media, an indie he co-founded in 2011. Previously he was chief executive at Darlow Smithson Productions.



NINA TASSLER STEPS DOWN AT CBS

After 18 years with U.S. broadcaster CBS, Nina Tassler – chairman of CBS Entertainment – is stepping down at the end of the year, as Glenn Geller is upped to CBS Entertainment president.

Tassler is to “pass leadership for the division to a key lieutenant,” according to CBS, and will continue serving the company in an advisory role through at least 2017.

Meanwhile, in his new role as president, Geller – who currently oversees current programming for CBS Entertainment and CBS Television Studios – will head the net’s entertainment programming and creative affairs. His duties will include leading entertainment programming for primetime, daytime and late night, as well as program development in all genres, including comedy, drama, reality, specials and long-form.

The exec will now report to Leslie Moonves, president and CEO of CBS Corporation, and will work closely with Tassler during the transition, the net said.

During her time at CBS, Tassler commissioned *Undercover Boss* along with such scripted fare as *The Big Bang Theory* and *The Good Wife*, among others. She joined CBS in August 1997 as VP of drama at CBS Productions, before moving to the network in 1998 as senior VP of drama development. In 2004, she was tapped as president of entertainment.

Prior to CBS, the exec headed drama development for Warner Bros. Television, where she worked alongside Moonves and developed such series as *ER*.

Since June 2013, Geller has served as executive VP of current programming for the CBS Network Television Entertainment Group, overseeing the company’s combined network/studio current department and creative affairs for more than 30 primetime series on CBS and The CW.

The exec joined CBS in 2001 as director and VP of current programming before moving to the Studio division as senior VP of current programming. Before boarding CBS, Geller served for three years in the drama department at 20th Century Fox Television.

Kelly Anderson



BEST PRACTICES: HABITS OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE

BY CHRIS PALMER AND SHANNON LAWRENCE

Every office has one. You know who I’m talking about – that person who seems to have it all, emanating an effortless professional cool. How did they become so successful? And how do they stay successful? Success is not a rare, inherent attribute; it is attainable by everyone. Being a success starts with successful habits, attitudes, and practices. Here are 10 habits of successful people to try in your life:

Be organized. Organization is a key to success. Keeping track of your tasks and commitments using a planner or calendar can assist you by ensuring you use your time effectively. Successful people maximize the use of their time.

Go the extra mile. Successful people always make an extra effort with their projects. Extra effort is what distinguishes an individual and makes them extraordinary. Make sure every professional effort you put forth reflects positively on you.

Make a goal plan. Successful people envision their futures step by step. Where do you want to be and by when? Make a plan for yourself and your goals, making sure to include deadlines for when you want to achieve them. Make sure that your plan includes both the big picture and intermediate steps for achievement.

Stay positive. Successful people look on the bright side. It’s important to find positivity in your efforts and professional challenges. Success is made by being able to transform the negative into the positive.

Schedule time off. Life cannot be all work all of the time. Taking time off gives you a chance to recharge. Take time to enjoy a hobby or a rewarding vacation. Enjoyment ensures that we can focus better upon return to our professions. Fun is essential to success.

Welcome criticism. Successful people know how to receive criticism gracefully

and constructively. Successful people acknowledge that criticism is not meant to tear a person down. They take criticism and turn it into improvements and progress in their professional lives.

Maintain positive relationships.

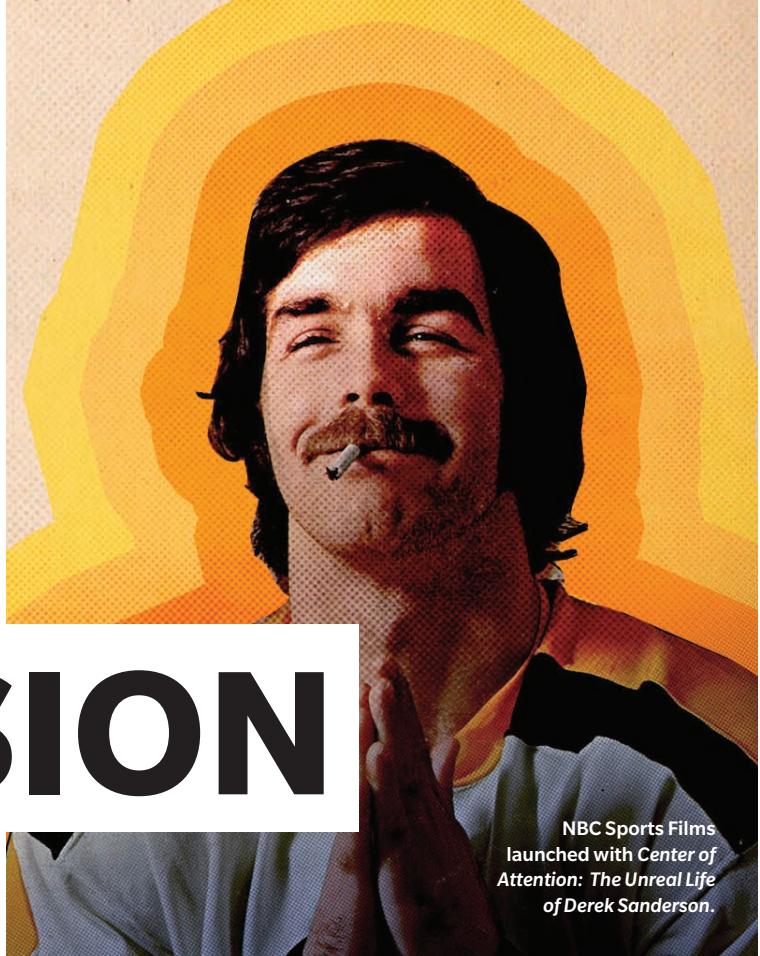
Successful people know that success often depends on assistance and support from other people. By maintaining positive relationships, you can increase the likelihood of success in your own life.

Celebrate the success of others. When others experience success in the same professional field, it does not diminish your own accomplishments. By learning to celebrate the success of others, you can find inspiration for your own success.

Be kind. Kindness is another key to success. Kind behavior makes collaborative work easier and a more positive experience. Most of all, kindness attracts the company of others. Kindness improves your personal and professional reputation.

Be confident. Confidence makes you feel strong and prepared in the face of obstacles. The road to success is not always smooth sailing, but confidence provides you with the power to stand tall and move forward in case of setbacks. Success is the result of cultivated practice and a focused mindset. It is achievable for everyone, no matter what obstacles you may face. These aforementioned steps may be able to increase the likelihood of success in your own life, personally and professionally.

Professor Chris Palmer is the director of American University’s Center for Environmental Filmmaking and author of the newly published book “Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker: The Challenges of Staying Honest in an Industry Where Ratings Are King.” Shannon Lawrence is a filmmaker and MFA candidate at American University. •



EXPANSION TEAMS

BY DANIELE ALCINII

Sports documentaries have reinvigorated various networks by serving a rabid audience with the story behind the score. Now, more networks and sports organizations are making plays for original programming. But as more players take the field, will it be harder for networks to hit one out of the park?

Mark Levy was perusing the sports section of his local Barnes and Noble when he came across *The Outrageous Story of a Hockey Original*, a national best seller from former Boston Bruins center Derek Sanderson.

Levy – senior VP of original production and creative for NBC Sports Group – could remember following much of Sanderson's storied 14-year career, including his assist on NHL great Bobby Orr's famous diving game-winning goal during Game 4 of the 1970 Stanley Cup Finals.

Thumbing through Sanderson's 400-page autobiography, however, Levy was unaware of the athlete's story following his departure from the league – a period that, for a time, found him penniless, sleeping on a New York park bench and struggling to overcome substance abuse. With his interest piqued by Sanderson's story of hardship and redemption, Levy decided to pursue the story as a long-form doc project for NBC Sports Group and its integrated platforms.

The 47-minute *Center of Attention: The Unreal Life of Derek Sanderson* premiered on June 8 across NBCSN following Game 3 of the Stanley Cup final between the Chicago Blackhawks and Tampa Bay

Lightning. It simultaneously launched NBC Sports Films as the company's latest venture, focused solely on leveraging the company's sports documentary capabilities and extending the in-depth storytelling it has displayed in segments during the Olympic Games, the NFL's Super Bowl and the Triple Crown.

"We knew that we had a loyal following with our hockey audience in the first documentary that we did about Derek Sanderson," Levy tells *realscreen*. "Why not super-serve that audience by giving them content that they would want to stay and continue to watch?"

"When we merged into this larger group – the NBC Sports Group – almost three years ago, it gave us, from a programming perspective, more bandwidth to share this content."

NBC's creation of a sports film division comes at a time when the documentary genre has seen a monumental surge in such content, both locally and across the pond.

While major British networks – BBC Sport, Sky Sports and others – have been producing athlete-driven films for decades, sports-centric programming in the UK has also ramped up in recent years. In 2012,

NBC Sports Films
launched with *Center of Attention: The Unreal Life of Derek Sanderson*.



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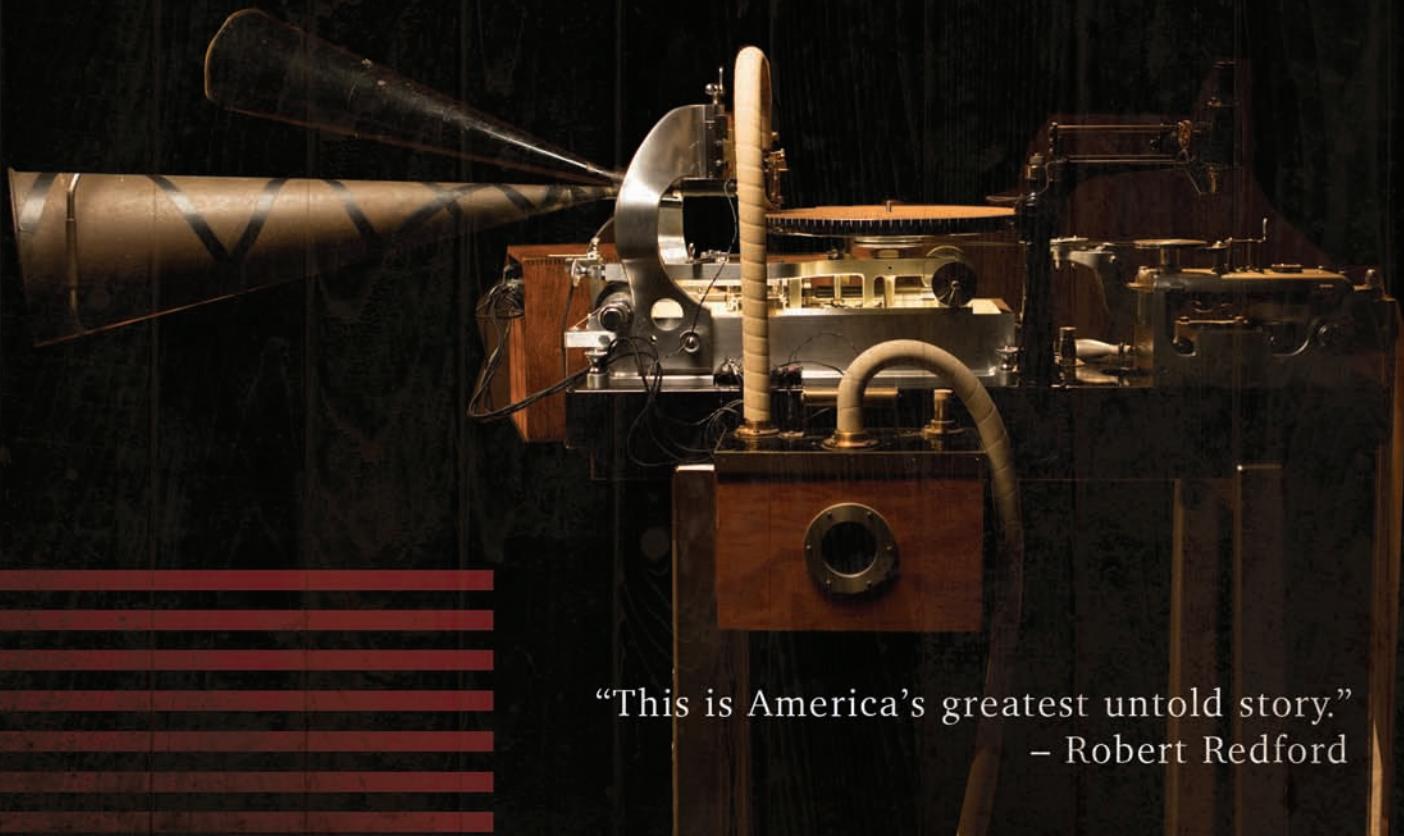
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– Robert Redford

A production of Lo-Max Films, BBC Arena, PBS,
Wildwood Enterprises and THIRTEEN PRODUCTIONS LLC for WNET

ITV Sport launched *Sports Life Stories*, in which sporting legends speak candidly about their careers. The series now boasts three seasons and 24 hour-long episodes.

Eurosport, meanwhile, launched its monthly intimate portrait series *Sports Insider* in March 2014 – months after Discovery Communications claimed a controlling stake in the sports channel group. In June of this year, Discovery and Eurosport inked an exclusive European multi-platform broadcast and distribution deal with the International Olympic Committee for four Olympic Games between 2018 and 2024.

Eurosport, which reaches 133 million homes across 54 countries, would be fully owned by Discovery one month later.

“Taking full control of Eurosport is the culmination of our commitment to strengthening Eurosport as a premier sports brand and fully integrating this business within Discovery’s unmatched global portfolio,” said David Zaslav, Discovery Communications president and CEO, in a company statement.

West of the Atlantic, New Jersey-headquartered NFL Films realized in 1962 that documentary storytelling could be utilized to capture and portray every element of the professional game for a broader audience, says Paul Camarata, a senior producer with the company.

“What a sports documentary might do, especially for us, is allow you to pick up a story after the final whistle goes off,” he added.

Such NFL Films projects as the inaugural *Pro Football’s Longest Day* and *They Call It Pro Football* – often dubbed the *Citizen Kane* of sports documentaries – enabled filmmakers the opportunity to dramatize the gridiron sport at a time when pro football was still in its infancy. This revolutionary approach allowed viewers unfamiliar with the game to connect to the human struggle off the field beyond the conventional highlight reel package.

Increasing exposure to live sporting events



“Why not super-serve the audience by giving them content they would want to stay and watch?”

would pave the way for the likes of ESPN, HBO, CBS, Fox Sports 1, and Showtime – and more recently NBC Sports Films and Sports Illustrated’s SI Films – to focus on developing sports-oriented doc slates of their own. When ESPN repositioned its approach to documentaries with the launch of ESPN Films in 2008, the U.S. sports channel grounded itself in a more cinematic technique, recruiting individual directors and supporting their visions for the stories they wanted to share.

A year later, ESPN unleashed its Peabody and Emmy-winning ‘30 for 30’ documentary film strand – 30 films from 30 directors celebrating the era covering the network’s 30-year existence.

Paul Camarata (left), a senior producer with NFL Films, checks out the final mix for *Hard Knocks: Houston Texans*.

“It’s interesting that [sports documentaries] have really taken off at a time when people were starting to wonder whether attention spans were getting shorter, and people weren’t just going to be interested in long-form content anymore,” said John Dahl, VP and exec producer of ESPN Films, who has overseen the production of such films as *You Don’t Know Bo*, *Catching Hell*, *The U* and *The Two Escobars* under the ‘30 for 30’ brand.

“I think we’ve seen completely the opposite – that they are very much [interested].”

Despite claims that documentaries may not be the best revenue generators, ESPN has invested heavily into the genre, having developed more than 140 films since the ‘30 for 30’ unveiling six years ago. The hope is that long-form films will plug the network’s content gap while enticing viewers to engage with the channel longer, thereby

"We're seeing the kind of engagement that you would see with a Hollywood scripted movie, where people want to watch the films over and over."

creating a revenue benefit in the long term through audience growth.

"Economically it makes a lot of sense to tell these stories, and I think we're seeing the kind of engagement that you would see with a traditional Hollywood scripted movie, for example, where people want to watch the films over and over," Dahl says. "It tells me that people are still interested way beyond the score. They want to know the story behind the game, behind the people, behind the event."

"I don't think that's ever going to change."

Now six years on from launching '30 for 30,' ESPN Films will roll out its third volume of 30 films in October. The mounting successes of the series have also sparked short-film initiatives in partnership with ESPN-owned sports blog *Grantland*, polling aggregation site FiveThirtyEight, Marvel Comics, filmmakers Spike Lee and Errol Morris, and actor Eva Longoria. It has

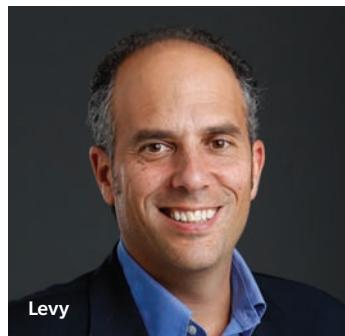
also propelled offshoot productions from the college football anthology 'SEC Storied' to the digital short film strand '30 for 30 Shorts.'

"The rise in digital platforms has helped feed the appetite for more sports documentary content," Dahl notes. "It gives us all another way to reach and engage audiences with an even greater variety of stories and how they're told."

Network executives such as Dahl and NBC Sports Group's Levy are hoping to take advantage of an upward trajectory by utilizing straight-to-consumer delivery methods and over-the-top outlets such as Amazon, Hulu, Netflix and Epix despite a marketplace

flooded with competition.

Still, cable remains a prime destination. The NFL Network, the league's U.S. cable net, announced in September that it would be adding two series to its original programming line-up, including *Football Town* from Leftfield Pictures (*Pawn Stars, Alone*) chronicling a high school football team based at the northernmost point



Levy



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How the bitter 1964 U.S. election campaign reshaped modern American politics.



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LT: The Life & Times, featuring NFL Hall of Famer Lawrence Taylor, was a collaboration with Showtime, CBS and NFL Films.

in the U.S. The network's schedule will now boast 31 hours of original unscripted and documentary programming.

NBC Sports Films, meanwhile, hopes to further expand its storytelling efforts through long-form content focused on the 2016 Summer Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and a second undisclosed NHL film, while brainstorming sessions are underway surrounding three additional topics: horse racing; NBC motorsports properties Nascar, Formula One, IndyCar and Motocross; and the English Premiere League, which NBC recently signed to a six-year contract extension worth roughly US\$1 billion.

"The way we're looking at it short-term is we've identified that we'll potentially do four [films] in 2016 and then we'll assess after that and maybe do more in 2017," Levy explained. "We're not looking to dilute [the genre], we're looking to make these viewing opportunities special." •



Dahl



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Friends “with” “Benefits”

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

With the success – and controversy – generated by Channel 4's observational doc series *Benefits Street*, international broadcasters and production companies are crafting gritty programs that shine the spotlight on various social issues. But are some topics too real for reality TV?

Benefits Street has been called many things, but a bankable format is perhaps the most surprising. The Channel 4 documentary series, produced by Love Productions, was widely derided in the British media as “poverty porn” when it first aired nearly two years ago. Filmed on James Turner Street in Birmingham, England, the show focused on local residents who live on social assistance – or benefits.

Critics and politicians called it exploitative, vilifying and counterproductive to the debate around welfare. While UK broadcast regulator Ofcom received hundreds of complaints throughout the five-episode run, as did the network, a subsequent investigation determined the series did not breach broadcasting rules.

Meanwhile, as controversy raged in the op-ed pages, in political circles and on social media, millions of Britons tuned in with episode three attracting a peak audience

Episode three of *Benefits Street* brought in an audience of 5.2 million, sparking international interest.

of 5.2 million. In response to the polarized reactions, Channel 4 ordered a live debate show, *Benefits Street: The Last Word*, and a second (less watched) season.

By that point, the acquisitions team for the global distributor FremantleMedia International was re-thinking the show's global format potential after initially waffling.

“The ratings were phenomenal. That really made me go, ‘We need to take this seriously,’” explains Vasha Wallace, Fremantle's executive VP of global acquisitions and development.

“When Love pitched it to me before the show aired my initial feeling was, ‘Can this travel? Is it for us?’” she adds. “It's about a group of British people living in a street where a high percentage of those people live on benefits. ‘Benefits’ isn't even an international term.”

‘Benefits’ is now a reality TV subgenre unto itself. Channel 5 has ordered several Benefits-themed programs, such as *Benefits*



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“When Love pitched it to me before the show aired my initial feeling was, can this travel? ‘Benefits’ isn’t even an international term.”

by the Sea, *Undercover Benefits* and *Benefits Britain: Me and My 14 Kids*.

In Australia, Keo Films' *Struggle Street* for SBS kicked up a similar uproar in that country, with garbage trucks from the Western Sydney neighborhood where the series was shot blockading the pubcaster's offices to signify local residents' feelings toward the show.

FremantleMedia debuted the *Benefits Street* format at MIPCOM last October and has since sold the show to Dutch commercial broadcaster RTL (which has greenlit a second season), as well as the British version of the series to networks in New Zealand, Australia, Sweden, Norway, Portugal and Israel.

The company will announce more format deals soon and is in “active discussions” with broadcasters about a formatted version of *Immigration Street*, Love and Channel 4’s one-off doc sequel to *Benefits Street*.

Love Productions’ creative director Richard McKerrow describes the show’s evolution into a format as fortuitous. “*Benefits Street* is a format in the sense that it is a concept but it’s an observational documentary series,” he explains. “I suppose the notion that it’s a street gives it a frame and a concept and the success of that allows you to take it to other countries.”

Rather than harm international marketability, the controversy and press attention in the UK gives Fremantle and potential international producers talking



While some critics called *Benefits Street* “poverty porn,” the show has ushered in a wave of social issue-oriented ob-docs.

points around local versions.

The company spent a lot of time speaking with McKerrow and Kieran Smith, Love’s creative director for factual programming, to firm up the format. Centered on one street, each episode focuses on a clear theme such as love and relationships, immigration and parenting. The series also needs to be filmed in summer months when residents of a street are more likely to be outside.

Each version is tailored to the regional market in which it will air. In the Netherlands, the series put a greater emphasis on the characters attempting

to improve their lives whereas the British version took a more observational approach. Although an ob-doc series in style, Wallace describes *Benefits Street* as part of a new wave of “social reality” series.

For Channel 4, it was important to deal with the uproar directly and defend the series. The network is no stranger to controversy or delicate subject matter, having in recent years ordered docs such as *The Paedophile Hunter* and *The Paedophile Next Door*. Still, execs were not expecting *Benefits Street* to blow up.

“I’d underestimated the degree to



McKerrow

“Any subject like this, you have to approach very carefully and journalistically.”

which the word ‘benefit’ – and the actual concept of benefits – was explosive,” says Channel 4’s head of documentaries Nick Mirsky. “There were such strong feelings about benefits on both sides; people thought benefits were being paid out too generously and others thought the strategies of successive governments have been too tight.”

Rather than avoid the controversy, network execs and producers from Love gave press interviews, penned articles and participated in the debate – a proactive stance bolstered by internal research that found the level of positivity among *Benefits Street* viewers was greater than what was being reflected in negative media coverage.

Building the trust of a specific community is key to a social reality format, but that became difficult when Love tried to produce a spin-off.

Channel 4 ordered six episodes of *Immigration Street* but the series was thwarted by residents in Southampton who became suspicious of production crews once word began to spread the makers of *Benefits Street* were in town. Channel 4 later issued a statement explaining that the series had to be scaled back because the crew began experiencing intimidation, verbal abuse and threats of violence that led to a highly charged public meeting during which Love’s Smith was shouted down.

“In a lot of these communities what you have are people who are happy and want to be filmed and understand the project,” offers McKerrow. “And then what you often have is behind the street, there is an element of criminality that is nervous about cameras being down there so you have to work around that.”

Multiculturalism will form the basis of the next spin-off, *New Britain Street*. Another ob-doc series, it is being shot in the north of England in an ethnically diverse neighborhood.

“When you shine the bright light of television on something difficult like

poverty, it produces an extraordinary reaction,” says McKerrow. “Any subject like this, you have to approach very carefully and journalistically. You’ve got to speak to all the organizations that are the experts in it. We’re also trying to say something new as well and make groundbreaking television so it’s a careful combination between the two.”

No matter how carefully a producer vets a prospective documentary subject, if the series becomes a hit, everyone involved must contend with celebrity culture, which was less prevalent in the past. Some of the people who appeared in *Benefits Street* have become well-known in the UK (and now Holland), which has prompted further criticism that the series is exploitative.

“What’s happened is the world has changed now in the sense that people that are in very high-rating series become stars and get agents, whereas that wasn’t the case 20 or 30 years ago,” adds McKerrow.

As FremantleMedia continues rolling out the format globally, Love and Channel 4 are taking a break from benefits-related programming to focus on ob-docs such as *New Britain Street* that center around immigration and multiculturalism – now a timely subject as the plight of refugees coming from war-torn Syria has become a massive issue politically across Europe.

“We’d have to feel we had something new to say if we were to go back into benefits,” says Mirsky. “It’s absolutely right that Channel 4 should be making programs about poverty but we have to keep our eyes out for how to do that in a different way.” •

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BEST IN SHOW

TRANSFATTY LIVES

Partners: Produced by Handsome Cargo; distributed by Film Buff and ro*co films

Length: 1 x 85/1 x 60 minutes

Premiered: April 2015 (Tribeca Film Festival)

Rights available: All rights excluding U.S.

Patrick O'Brien, better known in Internet circles as TransFatty, was making waves as a millennial media maven, a DJ and the filmmaker behind such DIY flicks as *UFO Mofo* and *Born Again Porn Star*. In 2005, his life was irrevocably changed with a diagnosis of ALS, and news that he would have only two to five years left to live. This doc follows O'Brien's efforts to move beyond the diagnosis, fulfill lifelong dreams – falling in love, having a child – and keep his trademark irreverent nature intact, while dealing with the inevitable progression of the disease.

With our MIPTV Picks in April, we noted what seemed to be an increase in what might best be called “the heavy stuff” – war, social issues, disease and other not-so-light fare dominated the submissions from international distributors. And while all of these topics make appearances in our final selection of “can't miss” projects for MIPCOM, the range of content submitted was wider, and even some of the weightier projects carry an inspirational tone. Just be sure to have a hanky on hand when screening a few of these, but also be prepared to laugh out loud and to marvel at the beauty of the world around us. Congratulations to our Best in Show, which wins a free pass to the 2016 Realscreen Summit for the submitting company.



JAGO: A LIFE UNDERWATER

Partners: Underdog Films in association with Fantomline Pictures, Vistaar Productions & James Morgan Films; distributed by Blue Ant International

Length: 1 x 60 minutes, 4K and HD

Premiering: TBC

Rights available: All rights, worldwide

Much like *HD* before it, there are those who would say that 4K was created with nature and wildlife programming in mind, and this wonderfully shot program lends credence to that theory. *Jago* tells the story of Rohani, an 80-year-old hunter who lives in a hut along the Sulawesi Sea in Southeast Asia, but who truly comes to life when diving deep and hunting underwater. Combining breathtaking footage of Rohani's underwater exploits in the present day with re-enactments, this film provides a portrait of the region's “sea gypsies” – the Bajau – and a 400-year-old way of life.



AMONG THE BELIEVERS

Partners: Directed by Hernal Trivedi and Mohammed Ali Naqvi; produced by Changeworx, Manjusha Films; worldwide sales agent: Cinephil

Length: 1 x 84 minutes

Premiered: April 2015 (Tribeca Film Festival)

Rights available: Contact Cinephil

With unprecedented access, the directors of *Among the Believers* take us into Pakistan's Red Mosque extremist movement, headed by cleric Abdul Aziz Ghazi, and into the thick of the battle for the hearts and minds of Pakistani children. Through the efforts of the Red Mosque network, scores of children across the country are schooled in jihadist beliefs via madrassahs, or Islamic seminaries. Here, through interviews with Aziz, his opponents and by following the lives of two young students on different paths, the directors present an unflinching look at the intensity of the ideological war being waged in Pakistan and elsewhere.



BECOMING US

Partners: Produced by Ryan Seacrest Productions for ABC Family; distributed by Cineflix Rights

Length: 10 x 60 minutes

Premiered: June 2015 (U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide except U.S.

In the U.S., from scripted hits such as Amazon Prime's *Transparent* to the media frenzy following Caitlyn Jenner's transformation, transgender stories are striking a chord. Unscripted TV has arguably led the way in telling these stories, with TLC's *I Am Jazz* (originally *All That Jazz*) and E!'s *I Am Cait* as just two examples of the trans-centric ob-docs emerging. Besides the lack of the words "I Am" in the title, there's something else that sets this series from ABC Family apart. Fittingly for the network upon which it airs, it follows a family – the Lehwalds of Evanston, Illinois – and through the perspective of 17-year-old Ben, illustrates the impact of his father's transition from Charlie to Carly.



MUMBAI RAILWAY

Partners: A BBC production; distributed by DCD Rights

Length: 4 x 60 minutes

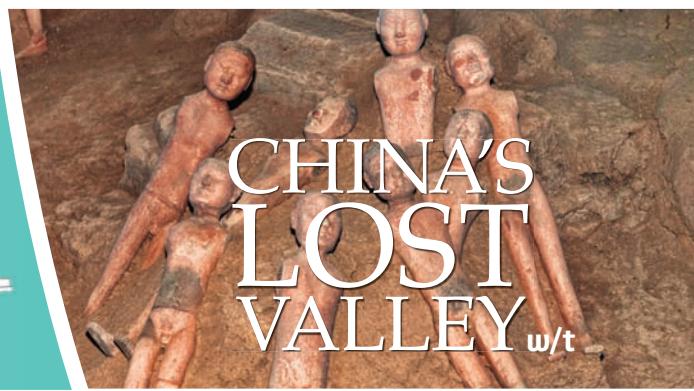
Premiered: August 2015 (BBC)

Rights available: Worldwide excluding the UK

Mumbai's Chhatrapati Shivaji Terminus is the central terminal for the world's busiest railway (hence, the original title for this series, part of the BBC's India season), and it is from this base where presenters Dan Snow, Anita Rani and Robert Llewellyn take viewers on a thrilling ride through Mumbai's transport system. From exploring the system's "mission control" center to following its users on their journeys, this four-part series gives you, from the relative comfort of your own home, a ringside seat for Mumbai's rush hour, appropriately known there as "super dense crush load."



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BODY DONORS – LIFE AFTER DEATH

Partners: Produced by Daisybeck Studios and GroupM Entertainment for Channel 5 (UK); distributed by Beyond Distribution.

Length: 2 x 60 minutes

Premiered: October 2015 (UK)

Rights available: Worldwide rights in all media, excluding format rights
We don't often like to dwell on what will happen to our bodies after we shuffle off this mortal coil, but increasingly, people are eschewing caskets and cremations in favor of donating their bodies to science and medicine. This project follows those who have made such a choice, illuminating their reasons behind it as well as the impact the decision has made on their remaining time on Earth. We also learn more about the process itself, and catch a glimpse of what becomes of the body donor's final offering.



A BRAVE HEART: THE LIZZIE VELASQUEZ STORY

Partners: Produced by Women Rising; distributed by Cinedigm, Tugg and ro*co films

Length: 1 x 78/1 x 53 minutes

Premiered: March 2015 (SXSW)

Rights available: Elizabeth "Lizzie" Velasquez was born with a rare syndrome that prevents her from gaining weight. Experiencing bullying as a child in school, the teasing took on a more horrifying turn when she became a teenager, and a video posted on YouTube, mocking her as "the world's ugliest woman," garnered scores of unconscionable comments. Remarkably, Velasquez chose to fight back, creating her own viral videos, speaking at a TEDx talk and having that video viewed millions of times, and heading to Capitol Hill in Washington to lobby for stronger anti-bullying laws. This is a portrait of the power of positivity and perseverance in the face of adversity.



PLANETARY

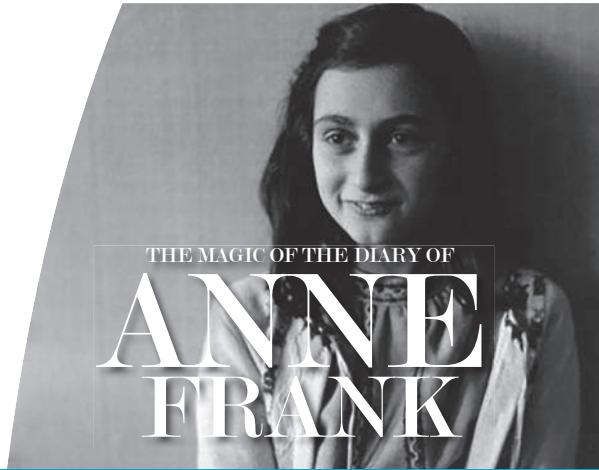
Partners: Directed by Guy Reid; produced by The Planetary Collective; distributed by Cargo Film & Releasing

Length: 1 x 85 minutes

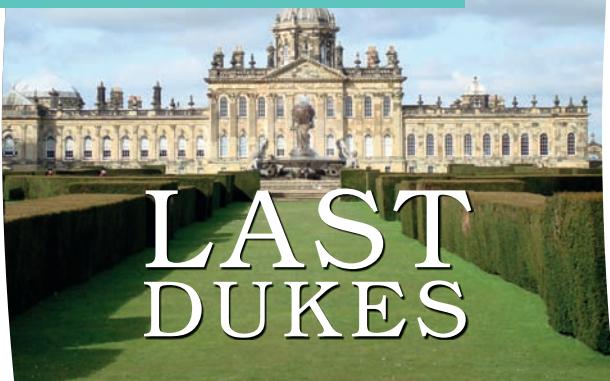
Premiered: March 2015 (SXSW)

Rights available: All rights, worldwide

Originally stemming from a 19-minute short called *Overview*, the seeds of *Planetary* emerged from the thoughts and words of astronauts who had experienced the magnificent rush of seeing our blue planet from outer space. Following a Kickstarter campaign to raise additional funds for broadening the scope of the project, the full-length *Planetary* is a meditation on our interconnected nature. Astronauts, environmentalists and anthropologists weigh in on the theme, with footage from Apollo space voyages combined with breathtaking vistas surrounding Buddhist monasteries in the Himalayas supplying a sumptuous visual backdrop.



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PRINCE PHILIP: PLOT TO MAKE A KING

Partners: Produced by Blakeway Productions for Channel 4 (UK); distributed by DRG

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Premiered: July 2015 (UK)

Rights available: All rights, excluding UK and Ireland

This Blakeway Productions doc for Channel 4 made waves earlier this summer upon its UK airing, after news broke that it would unearth some uncomfortable archival material exploring potential ties between the Royals and the Nazis. But such material, which has been in the public consciousness for years now, is just one aspect of this engrossing doc. Here, we see the power struggle swirling around the young prince as his uncle, Lord Louis - or "Dickie" - Mountbatten schemes to ignite a romance between Philip and Princess Elizabeth, and learn of the early misgivings towards the young prince held by some of the Royals at the time. Intriguing stuff indeed.



GRACELAND HAPPINESS PROJECT

Partners: Produced by Princess Pictures and the Australian Broadcast Corporation for ABC (Australia); distributed by ABC Commercial

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Premiering: 2016

Rights available: All rights, worldwide

Originally produced as a 10-part webseries by comedy prodcos Princess Pictures, this project follows two contestants of Australia's 2013 season of *Big Brother* – winner Tim Dorner and Ben Zabel – as they embark on a journey that will see them visiting Elvis Presley's Graceland estate. While the road trip will fulfill a lifelong dream for Zabel, who suffers from depression, it will also bring into focus for both men the nature of happiness, and the importance of friendship. Courtesy of the friends' radically different personalities, expect some laughs along the way.



MEGA-YACHTS

Partners: Produced by Icon Films for Channel 4; distributed by TCB Media Rights

Length: 1 x 60 minutes

Premiering: TBC

Rights available: All rights, worldwide excluding UK

All aboard, if you can afford it. Fully trained wait staff? Check. On-board cinema? Check. Swimming pool? Check. When money is no object, the imaginations of mega-yacht designers know no limits. This special takes you aboard the floating palaces of the sea – some of which you may see docked in the marina in Cannes come MIPCOM – and introduces you to the people who bring such oceanic opulence to life. From the yacht designers and crew members to the hopefuls training for their opportunity to make some waves in the yacht service industry, *Mega Yachts* provides a front-row seat (or would that be a deck chair) for some serious upper crust aquatic action.



WWII: CHINA'S FORGOTTEN WAR

Partners: Produced by Infocus Asia (Singapore) and China International Communication Centre (China) for History Asia; distributed by TVF International

Length: 2 x 48 minutes | **Premiered:** August 2015 (Asia)

Rights available: All rights excluding Southeast Asia

Produced originally for History Channel Asia, this two-part special first aired to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the end of World War II. Focusing on the war's longest conflict – between Japan and China – the film combines rare archive, interviews with survivors and captivating animation to recount such milestones within the conflict as the Japanese invasion in 1937, the Pearl Harbor attack, and the surrender of the Japanese in 1945.

036



SING IT ON

Partners: Produced by Core Media Group with Get Lifted Film Co. for Pop (U.S.); distributed by Banijay International

Length: 8 x 60 minutes | **Premiered:** May 2015 (U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide excluding U.S. and its territories and possessions and Caribbean territories (exception for SVOD in the U.S. for Netflix)

Sing it loud, sing it proud – a cappella is all the rage. Inspired by the hit *Pitch Perfect*, this docureality series from Core Media Group, in association with John Legend's prodco, follows five of the top a cappella singing groups from across the U.S. as they vie for placement in the International Championship of Collegiate A Cappella Finals. High stakes combined with high notes make this feel-good TV.

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Asian Highway



►MIPCOM Stand P-1.C51

Shibuya Crossings



Leaps in Evolution



SECRET LIVES OF AMERICANS

Partners: Produced by All3Media America for Pivot (U.S.); distributed by Cineflix Rights

Length: 10 x 30 minutes

Premiered: June 2015 (U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide except U.S.

We all have secrets, and some of them, we never share. But curiously, in an era in which scores of people hide behind the cloak of anonymity to conduct secret lives (with varying degrees of success) the same technology is inspiring others to reveal all, in a bid to lead more authentic lives. This U.S. series features 10 individuals, each with a secret they are determined to bring into the light – on a television show. From the stand-up comic who is battling anxiety to the tough-as-nails demolition man who is afraid of the vulnerability his secret presents, each cast member is given the opportunity to tell his or her own story and reveal their secrets their own way.



EBOLA: DEATH IN A VILLAGE

Partners: Produced by Docdays Productions, with Al Jazeera America and SWR in association with ARTE, with support from the Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting; distributed by PBS International

Length: 1 x 54 minutes

Premiering: 2016 (ARTE, France)

Rights available: Worldwide

Liberia, declared Ebola-free as of this past May, was one of the hardest hit regions in the 2014 outbreak of the horrifying disease in West Africa. This film follows five characters, connected by the task of stabilizing the area and ending the outbreak, as they battle the disease over a three-month period. By focusing on a village – rural Bong County – and the disease's impact upon it, we see the terrible toll Ebola took on the region, and witness the bravery and unflinching resolve needed to drive it out.



I AM CHRIS FARLEY

Partners: Produced by Network Entertainment for Spike TV (U.S.); distributed by FremantleMedia International

Length: 1 x 90 minutes

Premiered: July 2015 (theatrical, U.S.)

Rights available: Worldwide, excluding U.S. and Canada

When he vaulted into stardom via his stint on *Saturday Night Live* in 1990, Chris Farley wowed colleagues, fans and critics alike with a physicality that recalled both John Goodman and Chevy Chase, and a comedic depth and sensitivity that hinted at great things ahead. Sadly, it all came to an end with his passing at 33 years of age. Here, Farley's story is told through archive and present-day interviews with those who knew, worked with and loved him, including Adam Sandler, Tom Arnold and *Saturday Night Live* creator Lorne Michaels.

RAISING POMPEII HD

1 x 60' for ITV (UK) / CBC (Can) / Canal D (Can)



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6 x 60' for UKTV (UK)



THE HOME
OF GLOBAL
CONTENT

IMPOSSIBLE ENGINEERING HD

Series 2: 8 x 60' for UKTV (UK)



ALEX POLIZZI'S SECRET ITALY HD

Series 2: 4 x 60' for Channel 5 (UK)



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SPEED SISTERS

Partners: A Soc Doc Studios production supported by Sundance Institute in association with Chicken & Egg Pictures, Minerva Productions & Whitewater Films; worldwide sales agent: Dogwoof

Length: 1 x 52 minutes; 1 x 80 minutes (HD)

Premiered: May 2015 (Hot Docs, Canada)

Rights available: Worldwide excluding North America and Israel

This film follows the Middle East's first all-female racing team as it navigates tricky interpersonal relationships as well as the tempestuous nature of the Palestine-Israel conflict. Dubbed "Palestine's fast and furious females" by the press, they are largely seen as heroes by their fellow Palestinians, even though one Speed Sister, Noor, does raise eyebrows amongst some Palestinians for racing in Israel – even if she's representing Palestine in the race. A high-octane tour of a little-known part of Middle Eastern culture.



THE DETECTIVES

Partners: Produced by Minnow Films for BBC2; distributed by Zodiak Rights

Length: 3 x 60 minutes

Premiered: May 2015 (UK)

Rights available: Worldwide excluding UK

This gripping three-part series follows the detectives of Manchester's Public Protection Division, a team created to investigate sexual offences. Here, you'll see the investigators grapple with the case of famed Manchester DJ Ray Teret, a friend of disgraced BBC host Jimmy Savile who is himself accused of a string of sexual offences against schoolgirls allegedly taking place in the 1960s and 1970s. In real life sequences that will appeal to fans of any crime procedurals, you'll get a glimpse of the methodology behind the sleuthing, and be on hand as the team unearths clues to crack the case.



iCROCODILE

Partners: Produced by Earth Touch, Smithsonian Networks for Smithsonian Networks, National Geographic Channels International and Sveriges Television AB; distributed by Earth Touch

Length: 1 x 50 minutes

Premiering: TBC

Rights available: contact Earth Touch

What makes the Nile crocodile, one of nature's most ferocious and fearsome predators, tick? The latest factual program to make use of the "dissecting really big animals" template brings together two doctors – one, an expert in animal neuroscience, and the other, in biomechanics – to take their knives and scalpels to a crocodile cadaver and unearth the secrets hidden within. From their solar-heated skin to their magnificent jaws, lined with receptors more sensitive than a human fingertip, *iCrocodile* dives deep into the biology of the second largest reptile in the world.



FORCES OF NATURE

Partners: A BBC production with PBS, coproduced by France Télévisions; distributed by BBC Worldwide

Length: 4 x 50 minutes (without presenter) or 4 x 60 minutes (with presenter, Professor Brian Cox)

Premiering: 2016 (UK)

Rights available: Worldwide

If you are like the editorial team at *realscreen*, you've spent far too many minutes over the course of a day striving to find answers to fundamental questions such as: why is water blue, or why do bees make hexagonal honeycombs? Perhaps now, via this four-part copro between the BBC, PBS and France Télévisions, we will have our answers. Combining state of the art filming techniques with accessible science, this globe-trotting series (available as a presenter-led version, fronted by UK physicist Brian Cox) illuminates the forces at hand that make our lives, and our surroundings, so fascinating. •

041

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Michael Murphy, General Manager
Munia Karna-Konsek, Head of Sales
Caitlin Meek-O'Connor, Head of Acquisitions

Beyond Distribution has been a leading independent distributor of world-class television content since 1985, with a team based in London, Dublin and Sydney. Beyond's name is synonymous with programmes of broad commercial appeal to television audiences worldwide and the catalogue comprises over 4,000 hours of top quality and award-winning programming.



CHASING MONSTERS - 12 x 60' HD

Chasing Monsters takes us on a adrenaline-packed journey to seek out colossal and dangerous underwater creatures in the most remote corners of the planet.



NATURAL BORN OUTLAWS - 10 x 60' HD

Natural Born Outlaws tells the larger-than-life stories of some of history's toughest and meanest outlaws and the thrilling cat and mouse chase that ended their reigns of terror.



MOUNTAIN RESCUE - 6 x 60' HD

The only thing standing between thrill seekers and a certain death on Mont Blanc is the helicopter rescue squad of the PGHM; an elite Alpine force trained for the world's deadliest peaks.



LOVE IT OR LIST IT UK - 6 x 60' HD

UK property experts Kirstie Allsopp and Phil Spencer are on a mission to help families who've fallen out of love... with their home. The problem is the families can't agree how to remedy it!



BUILDING LA DOLCE VITA WITH DEBBIE TRAVIS - 6 x 30' HD

Design icon Debbie Travis is risking her life savings to buy and transform a 13th century medieval watchtower and farmhouse in Tuscany into a luxurious women's only retreat.



BODY DONORS - LIFE AFTER DEATH - 2 x 60' HD

Body Donors follows the journeys of two people, in life and beyond death, who courageously decide to donate their bodies to medical science.

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Christopher Brouder, Vice President, International Sales
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Alfred Haber, Inc., Alfred Haber Distribution, Inc., and Alfred Haber Television, Inc., now celebrating 48 years of business, together form the world's largest distributor of U.S. network annual event programming and are major independent distributors of primetime series and specials, including unscripted reality, crime and investigation, clip shows, pop science, music events, and films. For more information about the ALFRED HABER companies, please visit www.alfredhaber.com.



TOP 20 FUNNIEST - truTV *3rd Hit Season!*

Running Time: 49 x 60' | Genre: Reality Series
Comedic commentary charts the best viral videos, home movies, surveillance clips, event footage and news bloopers, as we count down to the week's most hilarious video.



WORLD'S MOST AMAZING VIDEOS - NBC/SpikeTV

Running Time: 65 x 60' | Genre: Reality Series
One of television's original reality success stories, it's the highly popular NBC/Spike TV series that features shocking "caught on camera" footage of gripping, dramatic events.



YOU CAN'T LICK YOUR ELBOW - NatGeo *New!*

Running Time: 6 x 30'
Genre: Informational Series
It's pop science at its best with the brand-new, fun and informative look at the weird, clever and amazing things you can – and sometimes can't – do with the human body.



WICKED TUNA - NatGeo *5th Hit Season!*

Running Time: 35 x 60' | Genre: Reality
It's the captivating, smash hit NatGeo series about a special breed of fishermen who face incredible dangers and unprecedented challenges to hook the elusive, and lucrative, Bluefin tuna.

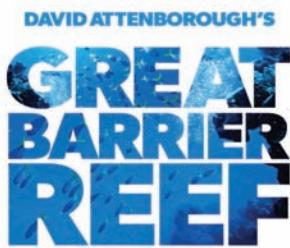
DEAD AGAIN - A&E *New!*

Running Time: 9 x 60' | Genre: Reality
Produced by Wolf Reality and Left/Right (*Mob Wives*) for A&E, *DEAD AGAIN* is the slick, stylized and compelling new, nonfiction series about an elite team of detectives that re-investigates controversial and mysterious murder cases to confirm, or reject, the original verdict.



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David Attenborough's Great Barrier Reef (BBC One)

Genre: Iconic Natural History Series
Episodes: 4 x 60 min
With astounding creativity, cutting-edge scientific research and breathtaking CGI, the world's most renowned naturalist and masterful storyteller David Attenborough and the multiple Emmy and BAFTA award-winning

team at Atlantic Productions embark on a unique, compelling and imaginative journey through the past, present and future of the mighty Great Barrier Reef – the Earth's largest living structure. In this iconic, natural history series, David Attenborough dives deeper on the Reef than anyone previously and reveals never before seen secrets that are invisible to the human eye. The series provides unprecedented insight into the most microscopic and evolutionary details of this global marine treasure, which is home to countless species of fish, whales, dolphins, marine turtles and birds.

Great Wild North (History Canada) Genre: Reality/Documentary Series

Episodes: 8 x 60 min
Great Wild North is a character-driven docu-series that follows four subsistence families in the northern wilds as they fight to survive another year. This tight-knit community battle grizzlies, wolves, thin ice, food shortages and mechanical breakdowns, all while racing to make a year's worth of money in one short trapping season. Life hangs in the balance, and failure is not an option. But this courageous group are more than up for the challenge. Similar to our earliest pioneers, they survive and thrive in one of the most hostile and dangerous places on Earth.

Great Wild North takes viewers off the grid and into a unique subculture of modern-day nomads who live deep in the wilds of Alaska and the Yukon. Tough, gritty, and anything but conventional, they survive off the land in one of the most extreme environments on earth. As they battle weather and wild animals to make their yearly payday, these trappers reveal a fascinating way of life lived beyond the bounds of civilization.

Serial Thriller (Discovery ID)

Genre: Crime/Thriller Series
Episodes: 9 x 60 min or 3 x 120 min
Serial Thriller is a three-part series that tells the grim and fascinating stories of the world's most notorious serial killers: Ted Bundy, 'The Angel of Decay', Stephen Peter 'Morin the Chameleon' and Edmund Kemper 'The Head Hunter.' Serial Thriller follows the gruesome real life stories as unfolding narratives, capturing the escalating fear and urgency generated by their unique reign of terror. With fresh new evidence and meticulous research, Serial Thriller presents their sinister worlds through a chilling new lens.

With powerful evocations of the fear and tension that have haunted the memories of real life survivors, this intriguing series reveals unseen archives and the grisly words of the killers themselves. The contemporary audience is taken back in time to witness the moment the murders began and the desperate investigations that ensued in attempt to stop them....viewers are reminded that before these serial killers became notorious, they were terrifyingly unknown.

passion DISTRIBUTION

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www.passiondistribution.com



Dead of Winter: The Donner Party (2 x 60/1 x 120')

Dead of Winter: The Donner Party is a major television event that tells the story of weather's most infamous tale.

In 1846 the Donner family and their travelling compatriots depart from Illinois bound for California. Travelling by wagon train and on

foot, the party is in pursuit of The American Dream. But what starts as a call to the West quickly turns to a deadly journey. After a gruelling six months of near impassable terrain, illness, infighting and navigational mistakes the party is trapped in the Sierra Nevada Mountains just as winter sets in early. The party makes camp in ramshackle huts to wait out the winter but sub-zero temperatures, torrential rainfalls, floods and ten foot snow drifts take their toll. With their supplies gone and no chance of rescue, the survivors are eventually forced to turn on each other in order to stay alive.

Narrated by Emmy award winning actor Powers Boothe (*Nashville*, *Hatfields & McCoys*, *Deadwood*), *Dead of Winter: The Donner Party* is a drama-documentary exploring one of the most macabre and sensational stories in American history through first-person narration, dramatic re-enactment, expert interviews, CGI, and archival materials. Through the scope of the landscape and the weather encountered, the audience is brought closer to the emotional and mental anguish these settlers experienced in this timeless battle of Man vs. Nature.

A Think Factory Media production for The Weather Channel



Terror in Paris w/t (1 x 60')

Terror In Paris begins with a horrifying massacre at the offices of satirical magazine Charlie Hebdo, sparking off a nationwide police manhunt, and ends with two dramatic hostage-holding sieges. The stories of how those three days of terror unfolded, from the perspectives of the victims, the security

forces and high ranking government officials have not yet been told. Driven by powerful interviews, original journalism and cinematic storytelling techniques this is a gripping, dazzlingly-executed journey from five time BAFTA award winning director Dan Reed, into the world of France's 9-11, which lasted 54 hours, left 17 dead and gave the world a new rallying cry: Je Suis Charlie!

An AMOS Pictures production for HBO



Frontline Fighting: Battling ISIS (1x 60')

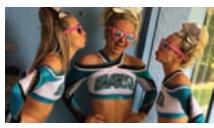
Frontline Fighting: Battling ISIS is the inside story of three untrained western volunteers with no family connections to the Middle east who heed the call to take up arms with Kurdish fighters to reclaim Rojava from Islamic State. The self-proclaimed 'Islamic State' brutally besieged Rojava – the Kurdish region fresh

from fighting for Syrian independence. The Kurdish YPG militia used social media to recruit foreign volunteers. Their call on Facebook was to "defend the civilised world against barbarism," – thousands responded.

Unprecedented access to these ordinary western fighters intimately explores their motivations and visceral experiences on the frontlines. They engage the enemy in intense sniper battles, close-range mortar strikes and face counterattacks from ISIS. An AMOS Pictures production for Channel 4



Corus Entertainment, a leading media and entertainment company, is expanding its distribution presence at MIPCOM with original content from the company's growing slate of reality and lifestyle series developed for its portfolio of Women's and Family networks. As a Broadcaster, the successful development and production of breakout programming with great star talent continues to be a cornerstone of Corus' success in Canada and this new slate of programming affirms the company's commitment to international distribution. Corus will be represented at MIPCOM by Rita Carbone Fleury who will be overseeing global sales of Corus' original content slate.



Cheer Stars (working title) (10 x 60')

Cheer Stars follows the members of the reigning World Champion competitive cheerleading team, who balance grueling practices with school, relationships and part-time jobs.



Masters of Flip (12 x 60')

Masters of Flip follows husband-and-wife house-flipping experts, Kortney and Dave as they breathe new life into old, rundown homes in the thrilling world of high stakes house flipping.



Buying the View (26 x 30')

This new episodic real estate series accompanies buyers across North America on their hunt to find properties that offer, above all else, the most spectacular views imaginable.

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Director of Acquisitions

Harriet Armston-Clarke
Head of Sales

Will Stapley
Head of APAC

Daniel Nemhard
Senior Formats Executive



DOMINO'S PIZZA: A SLICE OF LIFE

– Channel 4, 1x 60'
A rare chance to go behind the counters of the global pizza giant: think pizza make-offs, tomato sauce, pepperoni, pineapple - and lots of it.



INNOVATION NATION SEASONS 1-4

CBS, 4 x (13 x 30')
A mega quest to uncover the world's most cutting-edge inventions - including using soda bottles as lights and turning toys into health devices!



WWII: CHINA'S FORGOTTEN WAR

HISTORY, 2 x 60'
Oxford Professor Rana Mitter uncovers the blood and brutality of the 1937 Japanese invasion, gathering first hand accounts from China's last remaining survivors.



LUXE ASIA SEASONS 1 & 2

Channel NewsAsia, 2 x (8 x 30')
A rare glimpse into an Asia you've never seen before, this is a journey to the most luxurious locations the region has to offer.



BULLIES – Prime TV, 3 x 60'

Bullies investigates the personal and social costs of a worldwide epidemic: cyberbullying. Hear from the experts, the victims, and even the bullies themselves...



MOON SHOOTS – 1 x 60'

From giant leaps to tragic set backs, this film follows the real story of NASA's Moon Missions - using original footage taken by astronauts.

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BY BRENDAN CHRISTIE

Beyond Expectations

After launching what became its first worldwide hit in 1985, Australia's Beyond has grown and thrived over 30 years by focusing on quality content and the fundamentals of the deal.

Mikael Borglund, a founding director and current managing director and CEO for Beyond International since 1990, began professional life as an accountant specializing in entertainment, representing clients in the music and TV arenas.

One of those clients – a team made up of Carmel Travers, Ian Finlay and Chris Ardill Guiness – had seen some success with a program called *Towards 2000*, a science and technology show that had run domestically since 1981 on Australia's ABC. But when the broadcaster decided to not renew it, the talent and crew knew they were far from done. They still had a strong idea on their hands and wanted to keep going. So Borglund, with his then business partner Phil Gerlach, helped set up CIC Productions – subsequently renamed Beyond International – to support the rebranded *Beyond 2000*, already sold to Seven Network.

Fast forward to today, and things have grown perhaps beyond anyone's expectations.

Borglund recalls that in 1984 his team members

at the time were really novices in the TV rights management game. "We had a lot of experience as to how to do certain types of music recording deals," he says, "mainly with rock and roll and musicians. We assumed that was how you did TV as well."

At the time, bigger bands didn't become employees of the record label. They paid for their own master recordings from advances and would then license them to record companies around the world on a territorial basis. "We assumed TV was the same – not really knowing any better."

So Beyond kept the rights to *Beyond 2000*, and when the show went to air in June 1985 to enthusiastic reviews, Borglund *et al* decided they

MythBusters, a Beyond production, is now in its 13th season on Discovery Channel.



Borglund

BEYOND GENRE...

Although Beyond may have earned its reputation with knock-down hits in the science and technology space, Beyond Distribution currently has more than 4,000 hours in its catalog (about 55% external productions and 45% internal), across all genres.

Selling Houses Australia

86 x 60 minutes, Beyond Productions for The LifeStyle Channel (AU)

Nine seasons in, *Selling Houses Australia* is still fantastically popular. In 2009 and 2010, the show won ASTRA Awards for Most Outstanding Lifestyle Program and Viewer's Favorite Program; in 2013, it was Most Outstanding Lifestyle Program; and in 2014, it was named Favorite Program, Australian. In 2013, it was the highest-rated LifeStyle Channel series and the number-one regular program on pay TV. The next year, it became the highest-rated series in Foxtel history, reaching a cumulative average of 603,000 viewers per episode and 2.6 million unique people, which is equivalent to 37% of all Foxtel subscribers.

Deadly Women

118 x 60 minutes, Beyond Productions for ID Investigation Discovery (U.S.)

With nine seasons and hundreds of hours under its belt, *Deadly Women* is still going strong with continuing critical support. The series explores the psychological motivation that drives some women to become murderers. Former FBI agent and profiler Candice DeLong sifts forensic fact from fiction and offers insights into the motives of the killers, while forensic pathologist Dr. Janis Amatuzio guides viewers through the evidence.

Love it or List It

130 x 60 minutes (or 30 minutes), Big Coat Productions for W Network Canada

Love it or List It Vancouver

52 x 60 minutes (or 30 minutes), Big Coat Productions for W Network Canada

Love it or List It UK

6 x 60 minutes, Raise The Roof Productions for Channel 4 (UK)

Love It Or List It is an acclaimed real estate reality

continued on page 048 ▶



The *MythBusters* camera crew fixes a virtual reality rig to a drone, as part of the series' move into the VR realm.

needed a distributor. When they couldn't find a company interested in the show, they decided to do it themselves – establishing both a distribution arm and a pattern for DIY management that would characterize the Beyond way of doing things.

Borglund recalls his first trip abroad as a newly minted distributor was to the Monte Carlo Television Festival in 1986, during which the nascent company sold its namesake show into a couple of territories for advances totaling US\$10,000. But Beyond gained traction when it sold the series into the U.S. to the fresh-faced kings of factual cable, Discovery Channel. (Beyond would also version the format to a barely launched Fox Broadcasting Company, under the name *Beyond Tomorrow*, from '88 to '90.)

Discovery would soon become a key partner in the growing producer-distributor's success. *Beyond 2000* triggered a host of sales and commissions, eventually leading to *The Great Wall of Iron* (1989), a five-hour series that boasted unprecedented access to the People's Liberation Army in China. Directed by Scott Hicks (*Shine*, *Snow Falling on Cedars*), the series went on to win a Peabody Award and labeled the company as a formidable contender. (Hicks would go on to win a

best directing Emmy Award for Beyond's *Submarines: Sharks of Steel* in 1994.)

"*Great Wall of Iron* was a real watershed," recalls Borglund. "It made us realize we could do things that could stand on their own outside of Australia."

Beyond was able to produce American-style hits with consistency – something it would clearly demonstrate some years later with *MythBusters* (2003), a fan-favorite series now in its 13th season.

"*Beyond 2000* afforded us great opportunities in the U.S.," observes John Luscombe, GM and EVP of Beyond Productions (who also worked on *Towards 2000*), "because when we were starting a new project we could use the name. You'd come into the country and the guy at Customs knew the show."

"It gave us a level of credibility," he adds. "Then *MythBusters* became a very good calling card."

Borglund says that when it came to growth and expansion, there was no real plan at the time, outside of knowing they didn't want to go head-to-head with the studios and free-to-air broadcasters in the U.S. Cable was an emerging market, and Beyond was perfectly content to emerge right along with it.

"I think, in those days, the Discoveries of this world were perceived to be outsiders," he says.

“I could see somebody producing a T-shirt back then that would have read: ‘It’s OK to produce for cable,’ because in a way, it wasn’t.”

“And we were as well.”

“I could see somebody producing a T-shirt then that would have read: ‘It’s OK to produce for cable,’” adds Luscombe, “because, in a way, it wasn’t.” But Beyond didn’t care. It was proving it could tell international stories – an ability which Luscombe partially attributes to the company’s origins.

“Australian companies just have to get on a plane and shoot stories,” he says. “And it is fine because that’s what we do – though you needed some script doctors back in those days to iron out the Australianese from the material. But it didn’t seem to be a big deal to travel.”

That claim is a bit of an understatement. Beyond Distribution was soon set up in London and Sydney, with an office in Dublin. In 2013, Beyond teamed with broadcaster Seven Network to launch the joint venture 7Beyond, based in Los Angeles and focusing on formats and

content geared towards the North American market. Beyond Home Entertainment is based domestically in Brisbane and in New Zealand and does docs/factual, kids and drama. Then there’s the relative newcomer, BeyondD,

which handles digital marketing services, digital media sales and digital asset creation.

The company has managed to weather tectonic shifts in the industry largely because it has consistently looked to diversify and partner intelligently, beginning right at the start with its decision to become a producer-distributor.

“Producing and distributing gives you a lot of flexibility and strength, and we can finance our own shows,” says Borglund. “It

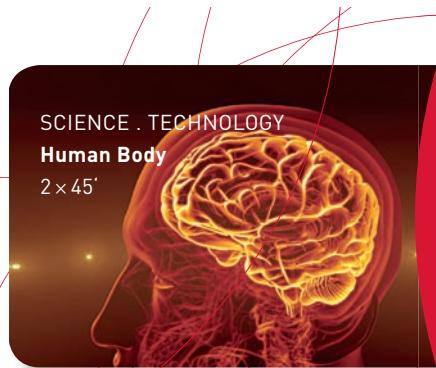
also gives you different relationships, at different levels, with broadcasters. We started going to MIPCOM and MIPTV in the mid-’80s – there are not a lot of those companies, other than the studios, who are still there now.

“But at its heart, we consider ourselves a

047



Luscombe



SCIENCE . TECHNOLOGY
Human Body
2 x 45'



CURRENT AFFAIRS
Wolfgang Schäuble –
Facing the Euro Crisis
45'



HISTORY
Venice – The Whole Story
2 x 45', 90'



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◀ continued from page 046

show that guides homeowners at a crossroads over the future of their houses. The owners are divided: One person wants to renovate and create their “forever” home, while the other sees no end to the issues and wants out. The long-running series recently sold as a format in the UK and has been picked up for a second season by Channel 4.

Highway Thru Hell

36 x 60 minutes + 8 reloads, Great Pacific

Media for Discovery Canada

For the past decade, Jamie Davis Heavy Rescue has patrolled the steep mountain passes of British Columbia's Coquihalla, one of the most treacherous major highways in the world. Thousands of trucks travel this path every day, and many don't make it. It is up to Heavy Rescue to clear the wrecks and reopen the road fast. The show debuted on Discovery Channel Canada in September 2012 and captivated audiences immediately – in fact, it ranks as the number-one series premiere in Discovery Channel Canada's history.

...AND BEYOND IMAGINATION

Still Alive

Still Alive is an upcoming series telling incredible stories of people surviving near-death experiences – with a twist. It features self-shot survival footage; people filming moments when they thought they were about to die. The series is 6 x 60 minutes and will premiere on Discovery in 2016.

New Virtual Reality

Beyond has also begun shooting VR – both support material for an upcoming *MythBusters* episode and content for Discovery's *Shark Weekend*, with additional special behind-the-scenes footage.

The VR content for *MythBusters* includes a tour of the *MythBusters* M5 offices, as well as – of course – some stuff getting blown up in virtual reality. The content will be downloadable for viewers through a Discovery site, as well as via YouTube in 360-degree video. Beyond is also starting to produce VR content for other shows, as well as self-contained, original content.



Great Pacific Media's *Highway Thru Hell*, distributed by Beyond Distribution, is one of Discovery Channel Canada's big hits.

content company,” he emphasizes. “That's in the DNA – creating content and then distributing it. Content is what drives everything.”

Michael Murphy, who worked as a sales agent on *Beyond 2000* and now serves as GM of Beyond Distribution in Ireland and London, says the split between third-party and Beyond productions in the catalog currently sits at about 50/50. But being both a producer and distributor means that the company has more points of contact in the industry, and that leads to good market intel.

Murphy says that Beyond Productions is a client like any other, and is treated at arm's length. But whether internal or external, he says the game is all about how you approach creative interactions.

“It's about building relationships with producers,” he says. “And out of those relationships come these wonderful programs. And whether they are one-hour specials or five seasons of a series, they get equal attention.

“Then they come back with their

next program,” he adds. “That's what it's all about.”

As to where the company is in its evolution, Borglund says he sees the development in plateaus. “I think we are at the point now where we are about to go to the next stage,” he says, “which

is growing our existing businesses, more so than bringing in new ones in the short term. It's about just using the assets we've got and being more aggressive in all areas.

“We will probably look at expanding our genres again – we've been out of drama for quite a while, and we are making a big push into

kids and animation at the moment – but I'm not leaving behind the factual side.”

Thirty years on in the journey, Borglund believes that the tone and direction for the company was set in its very first deal for *Beyond 2000* – a marriage of good content and a sound business approach.

“[It's] the basic understanding that content – the quality of the content – and controlling those rights is everything,” he summarizes.

“They are the fundamentals.” •



Murphy

THE DISAPPEARED, AN INVISIBLE WAR

Current Affairs
52' - HD - 2015

In Syria today, everybody has a family member or friend who just never came home. Whether male or female, Muslim, Christian or Kurd, the suffering and suspense is the same for all.



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PRE-SALES

THE WORLDS OF PHILIP K. DICK

Art & Culture / Literature
52' - HD - 2015

The films *Blade Runner*, *Minority Report* and *Total Recall* were all adapted from Philip K. Dick's novels. Many of the futuristic worlds he created are now reality. Who was he and how far is the reach of his legacy?



EGYPT'S MODERN PHARAOHS

Contemporary History
3x52' - HD - 2015

From award-winning filmmaker Jihan El-Tahri comes an intimate chronicle of Egypt's contemporary history from 1952 to 2011, from which a rich multi-dimensional picture of Egypt's reality will emerge.



SEX, LIES AND TABLOIDS!

Society / Lifestyle
52' - HD - 2015

The story of tabloid journalism in Europe and in the US, from the glory days of Fleet St. to celebrity gossip websites, and the advent of a true tabloid culture.



A DEBATE CREATES
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BREAKING THROUGH

BY KEVIN RITCHIE

Pivot in the U.S. has aired its eco-adventure series *Angry Planet* over four seasons.

When U.S. President Barack Obama traveled to Alaska to draw attention to the fight against climate change in early September, cameras were naturally in tow.

The trip was intended to create urgency around the issue, with Obama visiting a melting glacier, a salmon run and a community affected by coastal erosion. His media blitz coincided with the start of the last round of formal negotiations ahead of the United Nations Climate Change Conference in Paris in December.

To bring his message to a wider audience, the president also taped a segment for NBC's survival series *Running Wild with Bear Grylls*. The episode, due to air later this fall, is among the crop of climate change-themed programs scheduled in the lead-up to the Paris talks.

While some may call Obama's decision to participate in a reality show gimmicky, his move is indicative of a wider trend in wildlife and environmental-themed programming that is emphasizing entertaining and creative approaches to a subject many viewers consider depressing and off-putting.

Compare Obama's guest spot on *Running Wild* to former U.S. vice president Al Gore's stern-faced

delivery in the 2006 box office hit *An Inconvenient Truth* – a landmark film, yes, but research shows that approach may not be as effective today.

In 2013, an International Broadcasting Trust study found that in a 12-month period, no long-form factual program airing in the UK dealt head-on with climate change. Why not? There was a consensus among British commissioners that the subject was ratings poison and "any attempt to impose views or preach is likely to wreck any chance of reaching an audience beyond those who already have an interest in the subject."

The report cited Channel 4's *Hugh's Fish Fight* and Sky's *Rainforest Rescue* as entertaining and accessible programs and recommended other producers find similarly proactive ways to incorporate environmental themes even if that meant "smuggling in" the hot-button topics.

Two years later, some networks are heeding that message with content that aims to entertain while empowering viewers to take action on curbing climate change and protecting endangered species, by giving them concrete solutions.

"It's about tapping into people's passions,"

An Inconvenient Truth brought the conversation about climate change to the cultural fore... in 2006. Today's audiences flee from what they see as overly didactic content and as a result, networks and producers are "smuggling in" content about climate change and conservation in their blue chip and factual content, in the hopes that it will resonate.



Bonne Pioche's *For a Few Degrees Less* will air in France in advance of the U.N.'s International Climate Change conference in Paris.

Lucinda Axelsson, a science and natural history commissioning executive at the BBC, explained during a panel on climate change docs during the Sunny Side of the Doc conference in La Rochelle, France last June. "That's how you get the message across. Talk about things they love."

Axelsson called the BBC's approach "climate change by stealth." Rather than create programs expressly about climate change – which she said do not rate well – the pubcaster has covered the issue through blue-chip wildlife series such as

Frozen Planet and *Africa*.

"Climate change is not something we do in isolation... We're finding different ways of tackling it," she explained, adding that shows labeled as climate change docs tend to attract those who already believe it is a problem. "It's got to read differently."

One such program was BBC4's *Climate Change By Numbers*, in which three mathematicians who have nothing to do with the issue look at the math behind three figures from the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change.

Meanwhile, Australia's Unboxed Media is prepping the multi-platform

Youth4Planet. Set to be shot in September and airing in December, the series is described as "The Apprentice meets *Man vs Wild*" and takes a group of young people, aged 16 to 21, with big social media followings and sends them to the Arctic to witness the effects of climate change first-hand.

"It takes a 'Yes we can' approach: here is the technology, the know-how and knowledge that makes climate change avoidable."

In the run up to Paris, French network ARTE will air *For A Few Degrees Less*, a feature doc about climate change negotiator Jeffrey Sachs, and *Climate Ops*, a doc based on a multi-platform campaign running through the summer that asks viewers to submit video messages to UN negotiators.

Due to premiere on ARTE on October 28, *For A Few Degrees Less* follows the efforts of Sachs, an American economist and director of The Earth Institute, to persuade countries to cut CO2 emissions in half by 2050. Producers are delivering a one-hour international version that emphasizes the science angle (and thus, has a longer shelf life) as well as a character-driven, current affairs-oriented feature version.

"The aim of the film is to raise awareness and create expectations so the audience can make up their own minds if the Climate Summit has been useful or not,"

says Robert Salvestrin, COO at Lucky You, the distribution arm of producer Bonne Pioche. "It takes a 'Yes we can' approach: here is the technology, the know-how and knowledge that makes climate change avoidable."

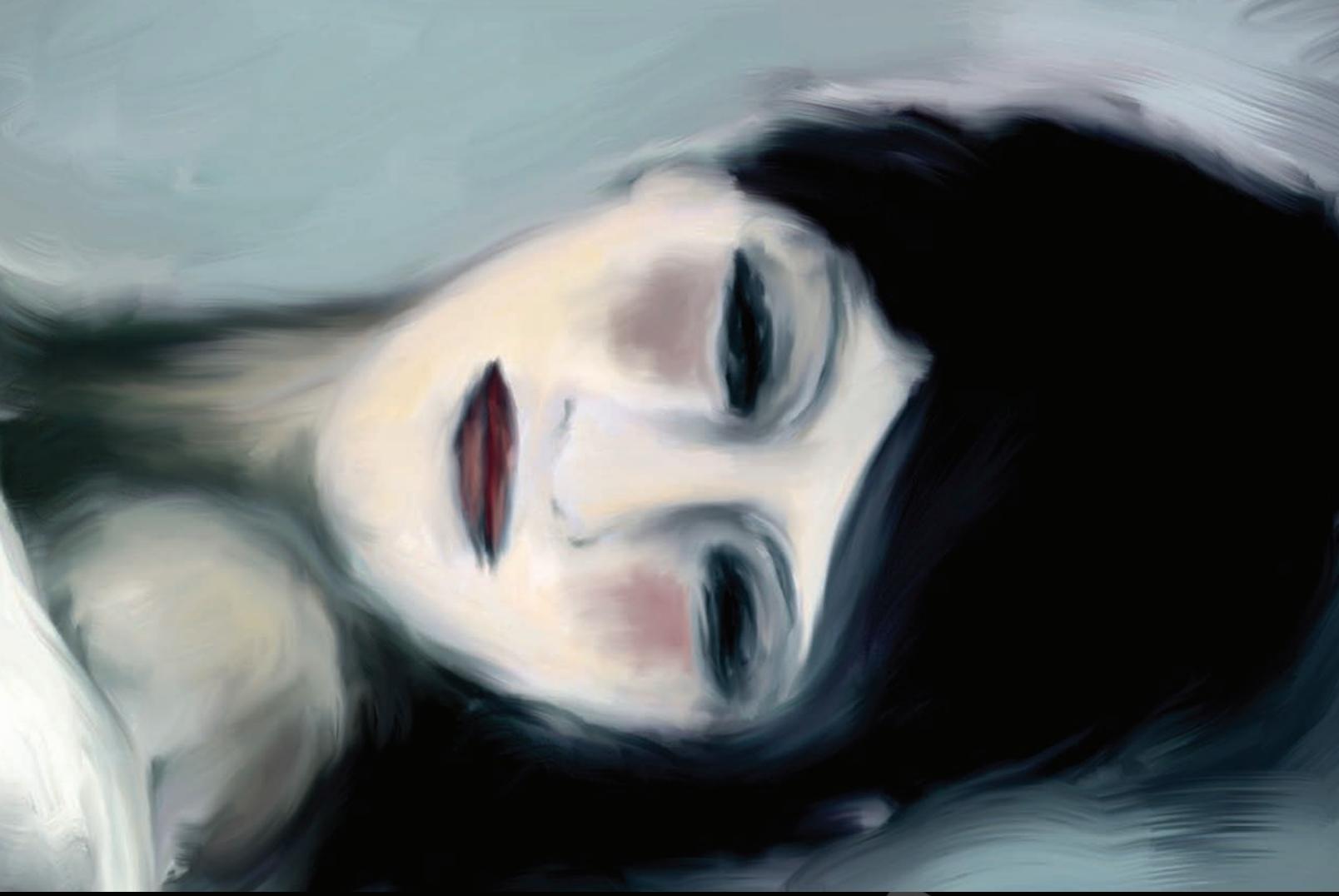
The doc has been picked up by networks in Switzerland, Italy, the Netherlands, Poland, Canada and in the U.S. by digital platform CuriosityStream, but it has yet to find an American broadcast partner.

In the U.S., cable networks Discovery Channel and National Geographic Channel have increasingly shifted their focus from reality programming back to core mandates of science and natural history. While that is good news for docmakers, commissioners still want entertaining approaches to subjects, including climate change and conservation.

On December 2, Discovery will globally air *The Cove* filmmaker Louis Psihogios' doc *Racing Extinction*, which takes a spy thriller approach to the topic of mass extinction. Psihogios has spent two years working with social impact producer Vulcan Productions to research the effectiveness of climate change and conservation messaging.

"We researched not only all the elements of the film and the style, but even down to the title because it's really important that you're luring them in," says Vulcan's vice president Carol Tomko. "If you said 'climate change' and 'greenhouse gas emissions' people just completely tuned that out. They don't want to see massive graphs showing how the Earth is getting warmer. They're like, 'I can't watch it anymore so give me a piece of information that is relevant to my daily life.'"

To overcome the perception that tackling climate change is heavy-handed and ultimately an insurmountable task, Psihogios focused on mass extinction and the plight of



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animals – a topic that people felt connected to – and the ways it impacts everyday life.

For Tomko, a resonant message is one of four elements that make an issue-oriented doc effective. The others are timing (is the audience open to hearing the message?), the platform (social, digital, short-form, long-form) and the potential for a sustained impact campaign.

On August 1, Psihogios and his OPS team projected footage of endangered species on to the Empire State Building in New York City for scenes that will be included in *Racing Extinction*. One of the images was of Cecil, a protected 13-year-old lion who was killed by an American hunter in Zimbabwe's Hwange National Park.

The killing sparked global outrage and his inclusion in the projection display – which was trending on Facebook in New York – helped drive social media users to sign petitions calling for bans on the ivory and endangered species trades.

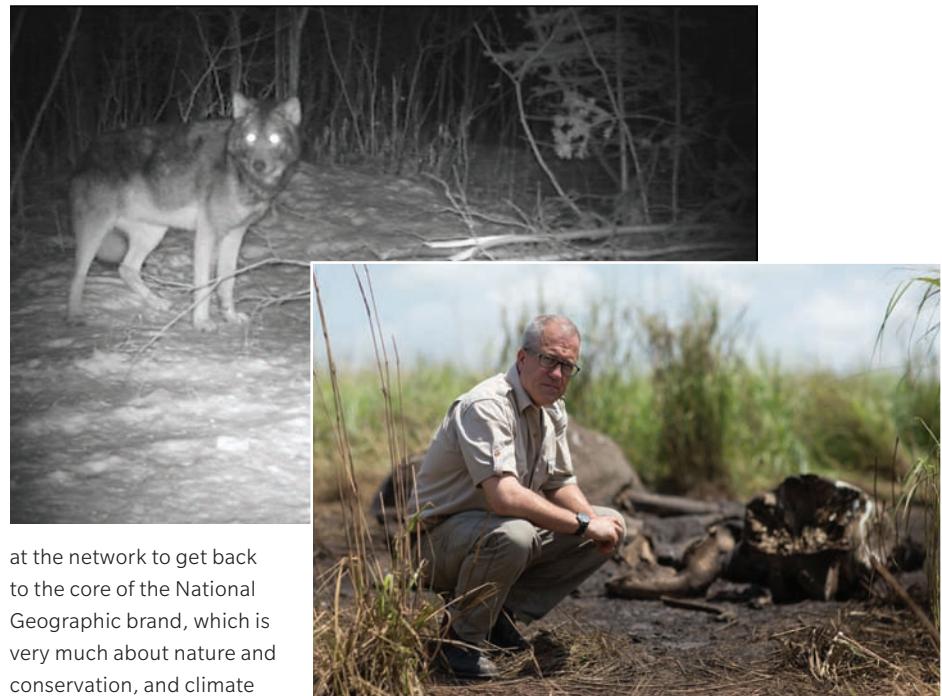
"When you see docs that have all four of those things, you have a much better shot of reaching the audience when they are open to hearing the message," she says. "You have a much better chance of reaching them in a platform they are willing to engage on and you have a much better shot at the kind of storytelling that they are open to."

National Geographic Channel is tackling climate change and conservation-related issues in the rebooted version of flagship doc strand 'Explorer' and in series helmed by A-list filmmaking talents.

The 'Explorer' premiere in August was *Warlords of Ivory*, a hard-hitting doc on the ivory trade that, like *Racing Extinction*, had an undercover thriller element as a journalist used tracking technology to trace the ivory trade routes across Africa.

A future installment will take a lighter approach with help from TV personality Bill Nye. In the episode, Nye visits a therapist who walks him through "the five stages of climate change grief" while imparting hard facts about the matter.

"Our approach is really to take the dead rock of what National Geographic is about as a starting point but to try and be as creative as possible," says 'Explorer' executive producer Robert Palumbo. "There's been real movement



at the network to get back to the core of the National Geographic brand, which is very much about nature and conservation, and climate change and the environment are at the forefront."

Another part of the strategy involves working with marquee talents who bring added credibility in addition to familiarity. In addition to Nye, director Alex Gibney is helming a series about water conservation called *Parched* and actor/director Angela Bassett is directing an upcoming episode of the Ron Howard-exec

produced anthology strand 'Breakthrough' about the California water crisis.

Participant Media-owned cable net Pivot airs the original eco-adventure series *Angry Planet*, now in its fourth season, and has acquired docs such as *History of Water*, *History of Earth*, and *Antarctic Edge*. Unlike its competitors, the network takes a hard-science approach in order to reach a demographic of conscious consumers.

"The ability to speak really frankly and directly and not with a didactic voice, but with an authoritative and scientific perspective, is truly engaging and we weren't sure in the beginning that that programming would work," says Jennie Morris, Pivot's VP of acquisitions. "We don't necessarily feel the need to present the case that

Top: DRG is distributing The Weather Channel series *Natural Born Monsters* globally. **Bottom:** Nat Geo Channel's *Warlords of Ivory*.

this is happening, but why it's happening."

Angry Planet works well because it touches on extreme weather – a popular topic with distributors. In October, London-based DRG will sell the Weather Channel series *Natural Born Monsters*, which takes viewers to far-flung locales to meet creatures that have survived extreme weather conditions. Climate change is not the focus so the series is another example of the topic being 'smuggled in' to an entertaining format.

Climate change docs also tend to draw backlash from skeptics and denial groups. At Sunny Side, panelists characterized the need to give both sides of the issue equal play – even if one side is contradicting science – as more prevalent in the U.S. and UK than other European markets.

While many of the producers interviewed for this feature agreed journalistic balance is important, they concur that viewers will accept the scientific consensus if the approach is creative and entertaining enough.

"It's less about debating one side versus another," says Tomko, "and more about showing an issue that we're all facing."

"You have a much better shot of reaching an audience when they are open to hearing the message."



Do no harm

In Chris Palmer's latest book, *Confessions of a Wildlife Filmmaker: The Challenges of Staying Honest in an Industry Where Ratings Are King* (Bluefield Publishing), the *realscreen* contributor and founder of the Center for Environmental Filmmaking at American University examines the presence of ethical lapses in natural history filmmaking and programming – his own included – while also proposing solutions for producers and broadcasters alike. In this excerpt, Palmer offers his thoughts on how broadcasters of wildlife content can ensure that they "do no harm" to their animal subjects, both in the field and on the air.

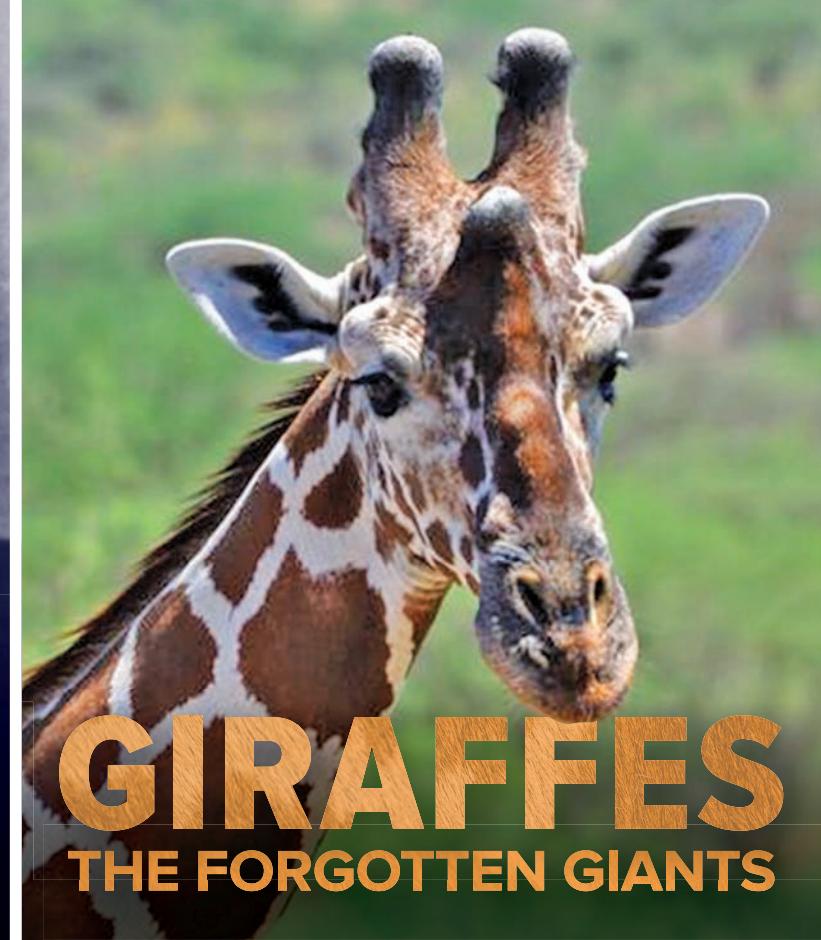
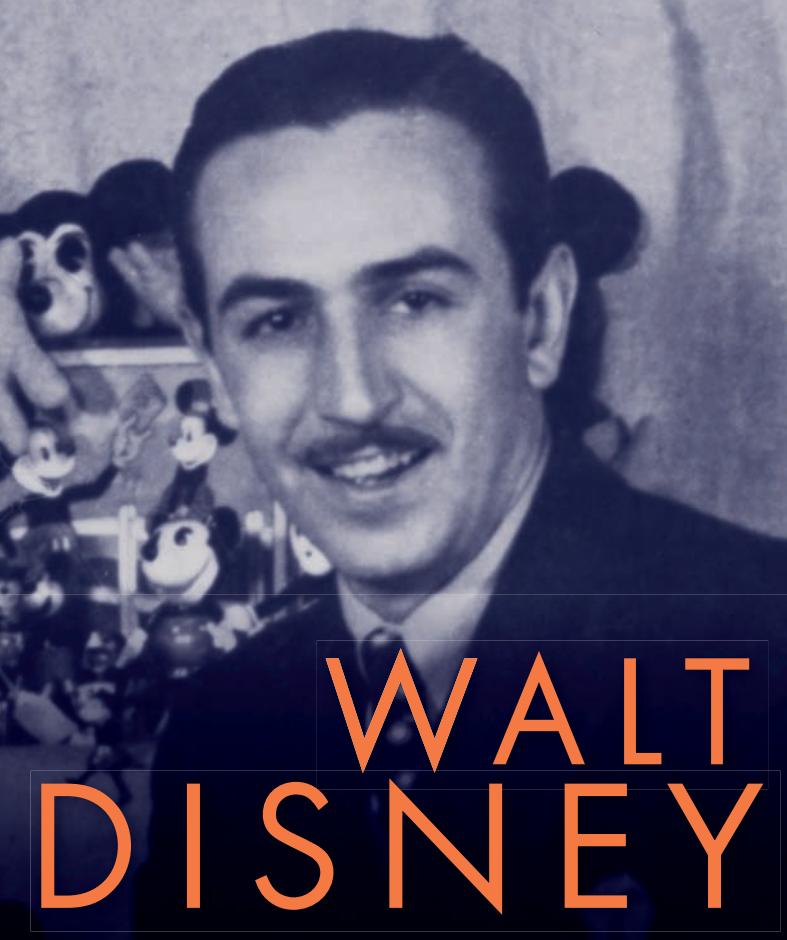
It is still true that the networks are full of decent and honorable people who care about wild places and animals. Regrettably, the business side of television seems to coerce them into practices that sometimes harm wildlife, spread misinformation, and coarsen society's appreciation of nature.

What exactly am I suggesting that broadcasters do? I don't pretend to have all the answers. But I do have some ideas.

- Broadcasters should give more protection to whistle blowers (insiders who expose unethical conduct in programming), mandate ethics training for all of their top executives, place more emphasis on producing ethically made programs, make executive producer bonuses dependent on critical response rather than just ratings, invite candid feedback from critics, allow scientists to have approval of how their interviews are used on air, and reach out to wildlife filmmakers to find ways to ensure that wildlife films can be produced without harming animals or deceiving the public.
- Broadcasters should take a Hippocratic-type oath or at the very least pledge publicly and on the record to do no harm and to act with integrity.
- Just as government agencies have independent inspectors general to sniff out corruption and improper conduct, so must broadcasters have an internal, independent watchdog. At the very least, broadcasters should have stronger, more vigorous standards and practices departments or ombudsmen such as those employed by National Public Radio.
- Up-and-coming filmmakers, as well as executive producers and others involved in creating wildlife films, should be schooled in wildlife filmmaking ethics, similar to how medical students have mandatory classes on medical ethics and journalists have mandatory classes

on journalistic ethics. Such changes are already beginning abroad: The BBC has established an initiative supporting ethical filmmaking practices. Tim Martin, who is heading up the BBC initiative, told me: "The BBC's success has been built on a reputation for fairness, impartiality and honesty, and that applies just as much in natural history programming as in our news and documentaries. So deceiving audiences or filming animals in unethical ways is a very dangerous thing to do in terms of damaging our brand. But it's even more fundamental than that – keeping the audience's trust is critical because our primary source of funding is the British public. Everyone in Britain pays the BBC's license fee, so as filmmakers we have to answer to the whole nation for our ethical standards."

- Broadcasters could also create a "stamp of approval" that would accompany legitimate, science-based documentaries to distinguish them from the bogus docudramas that now proliferate... When viewers see the seal graphic on screen, they will know that the film underwent critical review to confirm that the science is real.
- Broadcasters need to find more compelling on-camera characters. They need to focus on environmentalists who speak lucidly, convey their passion for the subject, and talk without resorting to jargon. They need to produce a new generation of authentic, involved, and enthusiastic on-camera personalities who know how to attract large audiences and significant ratings while inspiring viewers to become active in conservation. Broadcasters must recognize that stories that honestly address real issues about conservation and wildlife – and even science – can also feature characters who seem authentic, motivated, and idiosyncratic and who have vibrant, if often tumultuous, relationships. The way to succeed is to put the "real" back into reality programming.



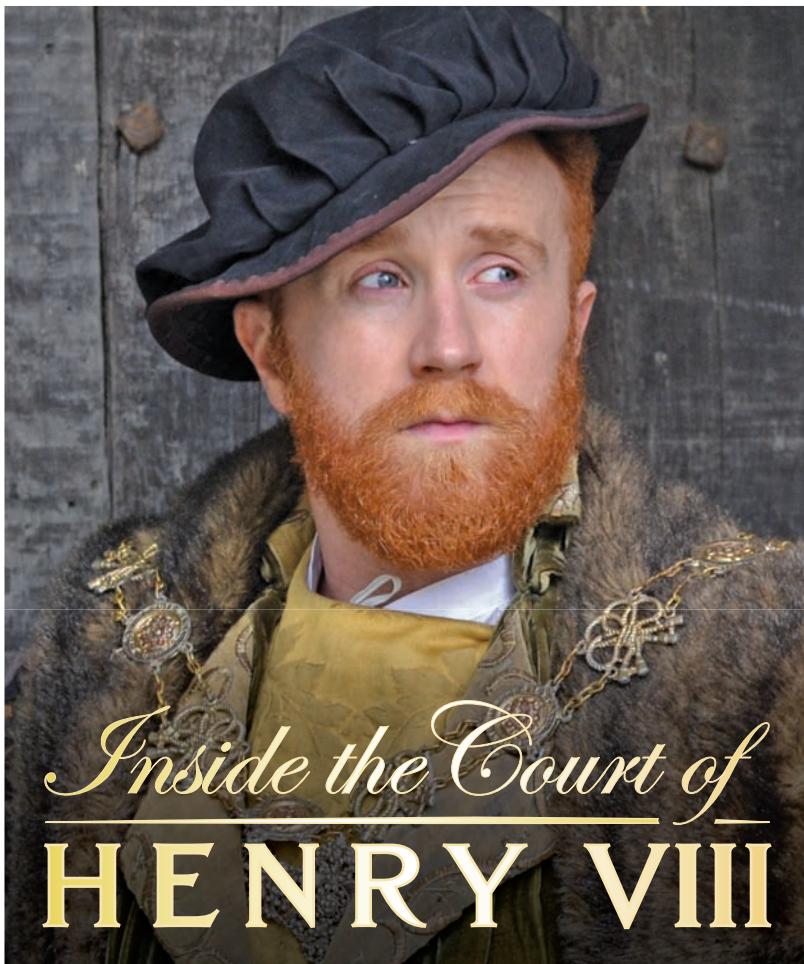
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Downer's drones

John Downer Productions used drones extensively for their BBC/PBS series *Earthflight*.

UK-based John Downer Productions has made its reputation in natural history circles with its immersive content, made possible through assorted production innovations. Here, the team tells *realscreen* about how turning to drones for its latest projects has “made it feasible to do things we only dreamt of before.”

BY CARL MROZEK

Compared to other major advancements in aerial cinematography, drones are relatively new on the wildlife production scene. Many caught their first glimpse of what drones can do in 2011, via footage of the Serengeti shot for a TBS Japan nature doc by the MD4-1000, a quadrotor developed by German company Microdrones. Since then, landmark natural history series such as 2014’s *Earthflight*, produced for the BBC and PBS by John Downer Productions (JDP) and its companion two-hour Discovery special *Winged Planet*, have made significant use of drone technology to wow audiences worldwide.

For the team at JDP, drones are the logical, and safer, successor to the mini-copters used by the prodco behind the *Spy* series of wildlife films (*Lions: Spy in the Den*; *Dolphins: Spy in the Pod*). “It started with 16mm gunsight cameras mounted on model helicopters,” says Downer, who first introduced the technique to his projects with 1987’s *In-flight Movie*. “Stability was a chronic

problem and we crashed many copters early on, mostly due to radio interference.

“Ironically, drones came along just when model helicopters finally neared perfection,” he adds. “For us, this came in the middle of a major project, *Earthflight*, and made it feasible to do things I only dreamt of doing before.”

Philip Dalton, JDP’s chief drone pilot, has used a full pallet of drones, cameras and lenses on JDP projects over the past several years, and used a variety over the four years of production for the ambitious *Earthflight*. Panasonic’s Lumix GH2, outfitted with 10mm fisheye or 14mm lenses, was frequently his “go-to” camera for the early drone shoots, including one that captured flamingoes at Lake Bogoria in Kenya.

“The stabilization was decent, but nothing like today, so we lensed wide but still managed to film the flamingoes with minimal disturbance,” he says.

Dalton has also used GoPros to further lighten the payload and lengthen flight times while minimizing disruption to wildlife. While shooting the white horses of France’s Carmague, the team

utilized a GoPro with the Flame Wheel drone from Chinese manufacturer DJI. “The horses were fine with the drone and we got spectacular aerials of them galloping through the marshes,” he recalls. “We also used the GH4 with the DJI SW900 drone weighing seven kilos overall, but still managed eight-minute flights.”

However, in southern Mexico, Dalton mainly used old school methods, like a jib, to capture the moving spectacle of millions of Monarch butterflies compressed into a small patch of cloud forest sanctuary, as even a small drone could have chopped them to bits in the propellers. Still, to capture the sheer density of butterflies in a restricted part of the reserve, only a drone would suffice. With the cooperation of wildlife rangers, the team once again broke out the Flame Wheel and the GoPro Hero 3.

“We flew at dawn, before the Monarchs took flight to avoid colliding with them and got amazing aerials of the colony, with no harm to the Monarchs,” Dalton says.

With the increased usage of drones in

Drones "expand the toolkit to tell stories in unique ways," says Downer. (Photos: JDP)

filmmaking, newer models are better equipped for the unique demands of wildlife doc-makers. Capturing 4K with drones, for example, has taken a great leap forward in the past year or two. "Earlier on, with a Red and primes, you had a huge investment aloft," he explains. And the higher the costs in the air, the higher the anxiety on the ground.

"The whole package was large, loud and bad for wildlife and for your nerves," Dalton says, pointing to "off-the-shelf" drones such as the DJI SW900 and Inspire models as the main drones in his arsenal at present. Dalton says the former is "like a BMW and iPad combined and makes capturing stunning 4K with the Lumix GH4 comparatively easy," while the Inspire, with nearly double the flight time capability, also has a 4K option.

Dalton used the latter for *Meerkats in the Kalahari*, for which longer flight times were required to capture more detailed behavior. "The new, self-contained DJI Inspire gave us at least 15 minutes [of battery life], plus a 4K

option," says Dalton. "This enabled us to acclimatize the meerkats to the drone, starting at 100 meters altitude. We gradually cut that in half as they eventually ignored the drone."

Also, the brushless gimbals baked into the latest generation of drones have greatly enhanced stability and have made it feasible to use slightly longer lenses. Compared to the new gyros, the old ones seem outmoded. "The servos in early drones were pretty slow, so stability was delicate and they required prolonged set-up time. It was a dark art with constant tweaking. They're dinosaurs now."

Dalton equates the brushless gimbals available now with "having a very expensive fluid head or Cineflex system built into the drone."

As the technology evolves, drones play an expanding role in new projects at JDP. "Smaller, quieter drones disturb animals less and enhance our ability to capture unique, natural behavior," reasons Downer. "Their shrinking costs now enable us to consider aerials for nearly every



new project."

Nevertheless, Downer says that even with a drive towards production innovation, from the development of the animal spycams to the deployment of drones, storytelling is still the paramount concern for the prodco. "Drones don't drive storytelling for us, but they do bolster it," he says. "Animal behavior and the drama of animals' lives remain our main focus, but drones expand the toolkit available to tell those stories in unique and interesting ways."

(With files from Barry Walsh) •

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Staying alive

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN

"If it ain't broke..." We all know the rest of the old adage, and indeed, several of television's biggest, and longest-running, unscripted formats seem to be in fine shape. But no programming juggernaut remains atop the mountain forever. Here, teams behind some of the biggest series on television discuss how to keep legacy formats fresh.

Adam Lambert (top right) was one of the few recent breakout pop stars emerging from *American Idol*.

If you ask super-producer Mark Burnett how *Survivor* has managed to stay on the air since its 2000 debut, he'll insist what's driven renewals for the CBS competition series – all 31 of them – is "a creative thing" that can't be analyzed from a technical perspective.

Tuning in to legacy formats is like receiving a letter from a loved one, analogizes Burnett. The message comes in a certain envelope with a specific kind of stamp and familiar handwriting, but what's written each time is different. "*Survivor* has this envelope – this familiar stationery and handwriting that's beloved by fans – but we rewrite the letter each season so you never get it where it's



Dockery

completely changed formats: it's just micro-changes to the format that the fans have grown to love," says the producer.

What happens, then, when a legacy format stops working, even with seasonal tweaks and refreshments? *American*

Idol's revolving panel of celebrity judges – and J.Lo close-ups – came to a halt when Fox canceled the show during its May upfront, serving a blow to a stable of long-running reality shows that have been mainstays in primetime line-ups for almost 15 years.

Though the U.S. broadcaster plans to end the program only after a farewell season beginning in January, the denouement of *Idol* has served as an auspicious reminder to producers and networks alike: innovate, but still deliver

on the qualities that made the show stick, which, in the case of *Idol*, was its ability to impact popular culture beyond television, through major singing stars and hit songs – both of which were in decline in latter years.

The question for legacy formats now is exactly how to balance a need for change while honoring a program that has historically drawn viewers – and a lot of them. *Realscreen* did a reality check of its own, and reached out to the producers and distributors of *The Amazing Race*, *Big Brother*, *American Idol* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* to gauge how their franchises are staying fresh in the U.S. and overseas.

Change, but not too much

Jane Dockery happily espouses a classic piece of advice on updating formats: "If it ain't broke, don't fix it." The senior VP of formats and international distribution at Sony Pictures Television oversees

such formats as *Dragon's Den* and *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire*, and insists that while in some territories, an original format can run for 15 years with the same host, other markets demand something different each season.

"Breathing new life into a format, keeping it fresh, attaching it to names that are a part of the current happenings in society, and surprising the audience are very important," says Dockery, adding that the key challenge is in "taking the show they know so well, and bringing new twists to it and new people."

After crossing the pond from the UK, *Millionaire* first debuted on U.S. broadcaster ABC in 1999 with host Regis Philbin and aired for three years before going into syndication. The format has sold into more than 120 territories, and is consistently tweaked with new lifelines, celebrity players and themed specials.

"In Germany [last June], RTL did a politicians special and the ratings went up to 7.5 million because they hadn't really seen politicians answering questions," explains Dockery. "One of the politicians decided to use a 'phone a friend' to call [German chancellor] Angela Merkel. Unfortunately she didn't answer her phone."

But despite the refreshments, she says, most audiences – even after 17 years – know instantly that they're watching *Millionaire*, and that's the point.

"Wherever you are in the world, if you switch on the TV and *Millionaire* is on, you're going to recognize it straight away because we've really managed the look and feel. It's done very, very carefully to protect the brand and make it as recognizable and true to the original as possible," says Dockery.

Going global

Ten Primetime Emmy Awards for Outstanding Reality Competition and 27 seasons later, *The Amazing Race* co-creator Bertram van Munster says the key to the format's success has always been its global stage.

"We're not stuck in the studio with the same décor," says the Profiles Television owner, explaining that the show has come to reflect changes in everything from people's cars to their styles and interactions with others. "That's what gives it a tremendous amount of dimension. We've taken full advantage of what goes on – year to year, week to week. When you see the show,



Van Munster



Local versions of Profiles Television's *The Amazing Race* air in Asia, Australia, South America and Israel.

it's maybe two months or six weeks old, so we're always up to date."

Since debuting in 2001, the around-the-world competition series – produced through Profiles-owned World Race Productions – has been sold into more than 80 countries, and currently has versions in production in Canada, China and Israel along with the landmark U.S. series. When asked how closely he oversees the international formats, Van Munster enthusiastically responds, "We're all over it."

Profiles' producers often serve as co-executive producers for creative and logistics, or as

challenge producers and directors of photography on international versions, the exec says. But regardless of the company's involvement, the shows only go as far as the budgets.

"Not everybody has the money," says Van Munster. "We have smaller formats. The budget ties in with the creative but also with the logistics, and we support and help them with that."

In Canada, the Insight Productions-made *Amazing Race Canada* has been a stunning success for broadcaster CTV. Currently in its

"You follow the format bible but make one or two little changes; if you change things too dramatically the audience won't recognize the show they fell in love with."



In the U.S., CBS's *Big Brother* has combined live components with savvy social media strategies.

third season, the show launched with a Canada-only season and expanded to international destinations in subsequent rounds. Showrunner and Insight SVP Mark Lysakowski says his goal has been to make the show distinctly Canadian, while sticking to the format rules.

"Canadians want to see Canadian stories on Canadian television. We all love American television but in a Canadian version, they want to see a Canadian story," says Lysakowski.

"You follow the format bible but make one or two little changes, because if you change things too dramatically, the audience won't recognize the show they fell in love with and that's important," he says.

Social savvy

If steady is the new win, CBS's *Big Brother* hasn't just been staying alive, it's been thriving. Just consider that a season 17 episode this past August pulled in 6.6 million viewers overall. Executive producer and Fly on the Wall Entertainment owner Allison Grodner, who has worked on all but the first season of the U.S. version of the Endemol format, says its longevity is partly due to its summer cycle – a move that has made *Big Brother* event-viewing for dedicated fans – as well as its social media integration and live components.

The format's live feed, for example, lets viewers watch the action 24/7 through cameras set up inside the *Big Brother* house. It's been a fundamental element of the original concept, but in the early days of the show, not all viewers had access to the Internet or knew how to navigate video streams.

In 2007, however, the show launched the companion series *Big Brother: After Dark* on Showtime – now airing on Pop – to let viewers tune in live during the program's late-night hours. Today, the

show has weekly live chats, mobile capabilities for live feeds that cost US\$5.99 per month, and even Twitter hashtags that unlock premium content.

"We have actually grown into technology, or technology has caught up with us as we say, because this started as a multi-platform show when it was a lot harder to access," explains Grodner. "You will see people talking about scheduling their meals, their summer activities and summer jobs around watching live feeds and watching the shows – it's crazy."

Giving it a rest

While the news of *American Idol*'s fate ignited a wave of commentary on what went wrong, many in the industry agree that the format had a respectable run, and will likely be revived elsewhere in a number of years.

"People who work in the formats business are very mindful of the fact that if you have a show on air, it's going to come to an end at some point; it can't go on forever," says Sony Pictures Television's Dockery. "But what tends to happen with really great formats where there's a built-in audience is that the format will go off-air for a year or maybe three years, but it will come back."

Similarly, FremantleMedia North America's president of entertainment programming, Trish Kinane – who boarded *American Idol* as an executive producer in 2013 – doesn't view the upcoming farewell season as the end of the show Stateside.

"This format is more than just a TV show, it's a brand," says Kinane. "And certainly in

"People who work in the formats business are very mindful that if you have a show on air, it's going to come to an end at some point."

America it's become a cultural phenomenon so I don't think this is the end of the brand. TV has changed so much and the way people consume television has changed so dramatically that I think it's probably a good time to just take stock and look at what the future holds."

The producer adds that *Idol*'s format refreshments over the years made a blueprint for other reality series. The inclusion of celebrity judges such as Ellen DeGeneres and Steven Tyler, she says, was a "major shift" as the show took a risk in moving away from industry experts. As for how the competition sustained itself for so long, Kinane says audiences still feel responsible for the successes of Kelly Clarkson, Carrie Underwood and Adam Lambert, who launched careers out of their *Idol* turns.

"People like to invest in contestants, and if they have a successful career afterwards I think it just reinforces that, but you're not going to get one every year. It's just impossible," says Kinane, addressing the lack of a recent break-out star.



Kinane

As a format, *Idol* is presently active in 17 different territories and has so far generated 241 series across 54 territories. Germany has just commissioned a 13th season with France following with its 12th, and the format is being produced this summer in Angola, Myanmar and the Maldives. *Idol* may have ended for now in the U.S. but its exit from the reality landscape may not be as much of an alarm bell as it is a certainty in the television industry.

"You've got to move, you've got to change, you can't keep things exactly the same," says Kinane. "I think if we had stuck with everything in the format exactly the same as it was in 2002, we wouldn't still be on the air."

"The fact that this show is still on after 15 seasons, we got it about right."

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MARKETWATCH

Formats are made to travel, and as more markets emerge for unscripted formats, more opportunities arise for content creators and rights holders. Here, *realscreen* goes globetrotting to report on recent activities shaping three regions to watch.



Mongolia

Population: 3,000,000

Number of television channels:
Approximately 150

From left to right:
Mongolia's Got Talent;
Mongol TV CEO Nomin Chinbat.

Almost a year after Simon Cowell cast his MIPCOM 2014 wish for a *Got Talent* competition in Mongolia, the producer's dream was realized in September when broadcaster Mongol TV launched its own version of the talent show.

Helmed by CEO Nomin Chinbat, Mongol TV has set itself apart in the country's saturated TV market as a leader that plays by the rules and rejects the piracy rampant among Mongolia's myriad TV networks. Despite a population of three million, 150 active channels compete to show the newest and best programming, but because this content is usually too expensive to license from Western countries, films and TV shows are often pirated.

Further, many stations are owned by aspiring or serving politicians who use their channels as platforms during election periods but fail to invest in them the rest of the time. Combined with a lack of advertising revenue for all the networks, the climate cultivates an unequal playing ground, even forcing channels looking to be legitimate operations into piracy, in order to keep up.

Since taking the reins as CEO of Mongol TV in 2011, Chinbat has been on a mission to legally acquire all content on the station and boost local production. The exec's first step was reaching out to Michel Rodrigue, CEO of consultancy group The Format People, who, upon assessing the market and Mongol TV's competitors, ultimately advised Chinbat to ramp up live programming, introduce a morning show and produce less biased news. Together, the team built two TV studios.

"We made sure that we applied Western TV knowledge to

BY MANORI RAVINDRAN



technology and the aspects of TV production and broadcast scheduling in general, so the strategy was mainly to use top American programs – dramas – to put in primetime and build up the local content around that," said Rodrigue, adding that he brought in 27 international TV specialists to revamp Mongol TV.

Outside of acquiring dramas such as AMC's *Breaking Bad*, the broadcaster has focused local production on factual entertainment, specifically formats. A multi-season deal for *Got Talent* was inked with producers Syco Entertainment and FremantleMedia last December – the most expensive production in the history of Mongolia, says Chinbat – and in January Mongol TV commissioned a local version of the Channel 4 hit *Gogglebox*, slated to air in December.

"Everyone, from the broadcasters to the viewers, is eager about the content," says Chinbat, discussing *Got Talent*. "There's a lot of curiosity out there, and people want to know who the judges are, so buzz is really high. As a small station, we're joking that we're becoming a *Mongolia's Got Talent* production rather than a TV station because everybody's doing something [on the show]."

Going forward, Chinbat hopes the Mongol TV Forum – an industry-wide event she helped to launch in 2014 – will draw international interest to the territory and unite local broadcasters and cable channels. The recent two-day iteration in February garnered 200 industry executives, including five U.S. studios and UK broadcaster ITV, and featured keynotes by government officials and regulatory body representatives as well as panels on global trends and the future for Mongolian television.

Though finances continue to be a difficulty for Mongol TV given the country is still in a recession period, Chinbat says her immediate goal is to boost local production.

"Through these kinds of large productions and live content, I'd like the viewers to see what TV and entertainment can bring them," says Chinbat. "At the moment, we see a lot of political news and issues on our TV, but it could be entertainment and it could be produced in Mongolia."



China

Population:
Approximately 1.3 billion

Number of television
channels: 3,000+

Fierce competition among countless networks and the unpredictable TV regulations of the State Administration of Radio, Film and Television (SARFT) continue to shape the Chinese broadcast landscape, but improved communication between the East and West is nurturing a more accessible market that is increasingly open to international rights holders.

Since forming in 2007, Shanghai-headquartered format producer-

distributor IPCN has served as something of a bridge between global content providers and the Chinese market, bringing more than 35 formats including *The Voice of China* and *China's Got Talent* into the country.

"I'm constantly educating both sides on how to understand and respect each other," IPCN CEO Rebecca Yang, who works between London and Shanghai, tells *realscreen*. "So the West isn't coming down on their high horses and saying, 'Those are the things you do, those are the rules,' and the Chinese are not so closed-minded and arrogant to the extent where they say, 'Well, there's nothing to learn from you guys, we can simply copy it.'"

After the successful 2012 debut of *The*



From the top: Chen Zitong, a finalist on *The Voice of China*; Star China Media's *Sing My Song*.

Voice of China on Star China Media, Yang says the company has shifted focus to "aggressively" push into original productions. In 2013, IPCN helped the entertainment media company develop the composing competition *Sing My Song*, which was distributed by ITV Studios Global Entertainment in March to Vietnam's VTV 3, where it premiered in September. Meanwhile, Yang says IPCN's next project is a "treasure hunting-travelling type of reality show" shot abroad and created with a UK producer that will launch in October.

Though government restrictions on television production, such as quotas on international formats and domestic content airing in primetime, are still in place and change constantly, Yang points out that these guidelines also force producers and broadcasters to be more adaptable, and encourage domestic output.

"It's [SARFT's] way to control things in the safest way," says the exec. "Sometimes the group comes up with, 'There's only four singing shows allowed' – which I support because otherwise the whole of China will be singing – but sometimes things can be a bit of a strain."

Over at Star China Media, newly appointed deputy general manager Iris Xia – who took over after Vivian Yin exited the company in July to head FremantleMedia China – says more awareness around the legal use of intellectual property is also improving conditions for the formats market.

"When the production houses and TV stations work closely with the original format licensor, they enjoy the production bible and the supporting team's full experience," explains Xia. "When market segmentation proceeds, the rights owner also shares their significant revenue models with the buyer, and co-develop together."

That's not to say, however, that attitudes have shifted without criticism. Yang says that when IPCN introduced *The Voice of China*, many industry leaders said that adapting international formats legally was going to hinder domestic creativity.

"There were voices like that, but I strongly went against it," said Yang. "Format licensing is a very established international business that didn't really restrict the British, the Dutch or any of the other countries, so why should it restrict the Chinese?"

In the last two years, an essential change has been China's evolution as an international buyer. The country has a stronger



presence than ever at industry-wide events such as MIPCOM, where buyers are approaching more diverse content providers and also setting their sights on digital programming. Such moves as public equity and venture capital firm China Media Capital – which bought a stake in IPCN this past April – launching youth-focused smart TV device Wei Jing this past August and attracting investments from Internet companies Alibaba and Tencent point towards more dedicated factual content heading to non-linear platforms.



Turkey

Population: More than 78 million

Number of television channels: Approximately 635

Top left: Shopping Monsters; top right: Keep Your Light Shining

Though Turkey's extensive dramatic output has made it one of the world's largest scripted producers with scripted drama exports now valued at about US\$200 million annually, the country's unscripted business is slowly but surely gaining traction. Named the country of honor at this fall's MIPCOM market, Turkish exhibitors including TRT, Kanal D, Global Agency and ITV-Inter Medya will step into the spotlight in Cannes with a showcase of dramas, feature films, documentaries and animation, as well as a roster of international-facing formats.

Izzet Pinto, CEO and founder of Istanbul-based distributor Global Agency, founded the company in 2006 with a team of just two. Nine years later, the distributor manages 120 scripted and unscripted projects with a staff of 150, and has built a reputation as a major formats player in the international market.

The exec says global sales for Turkish formats have done exceedingly well in recent years. Unlike the country's dramatic output, which targets Arabic-speaking markets in the Middle East and CEE in particular, unscripted programming has a wider and more global appeal. As such, titles such as daytime show *Shopping Monsters*, dating format *Perfect Bride* and cooking competition series *Rivals in Law* have proven to be best-sellers for the company. Most recently, FremantleMedia acquired the rights to the distributor's singing format *It's Showtime* in a deal that covers 20 territories including the UK, U.S. and Australia. Meanwhile, Hungary's RTL2 is set to air the first international version of the access prime, daily stripped entertainment show.



Asked why Global Agency formats do so well overseas, Pinto attributes the company's success to "good ideas and unique formats" that often capitalize on characteristics of the local culture. *Perfect Bride*, for instance, plays off the Turkish tradition of mothers choosing brides for their sons. But despite the success of such programs, unscripted programming has a longer way to go among Turkish audiences, who prefer dramatic offerings.

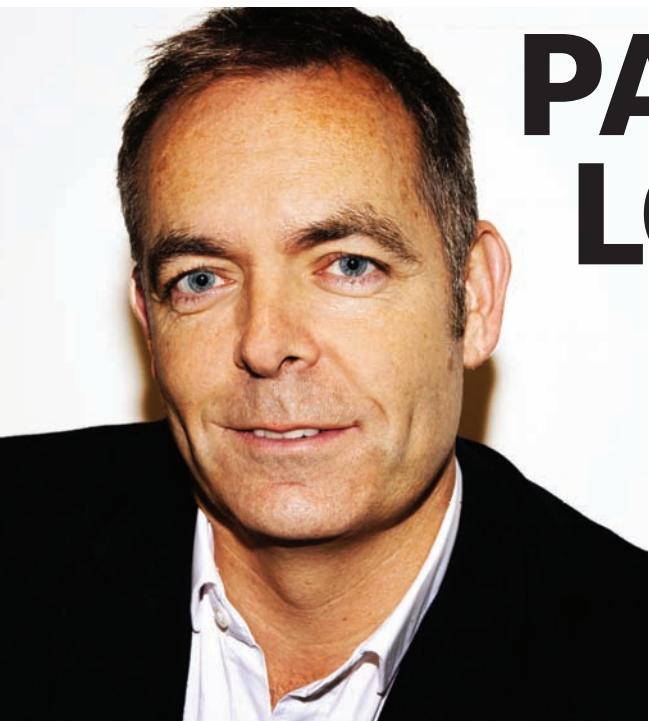
"Viewers are mostly interested in drama series so even if we have a space for unscripted formats, the viewers are more interested in drama," says Pinto. "The market is 80% drama and 20% will watch formats."

At the moment, France and Germany are the top buyers of Turkish content, along with Ukraine, Russia, and, increasingly, China. Meanwhile,

over in the U.S., interactive talent show *Keep Your Light Shining* has been piloted by CBS. Pinto points out that although the distributor sold its drama series *Game of Silence* to NBC, the American market isn't as much of a priority as the European market because of fewer season renewals compared to Europe, which produces more episodes. The focus now is bolstering unscripted sales in Latin America, where Global Agency had great success with scripted series *1001 Nights*, which was acquired by almost every territory in the region and opened the door for other Turkish dramas. •



Pinto



PARADIGM LOST?

The current age of consolidation is seeing super-indies morph into mega-indies, in the distribution sector as well as the production world. But amidst the behemoths there are smaller boutiques touting more specialized care for their catalogs. **TCB Media Rights' Paul Heaney** examines the pros and cons of both, as well as the dilemma facing medium-sized players in the new dynamic.

Distribution is taking a bit of a battering at the moment. For some – Endemol Shine springs to mind – it's clearly the best of times. But for most of us, it's shaping up to be a period of transition. It's a painful process for some, less so for others.

The scale, power and pipelines of the new "shopping mall" distributors are awesome, albeit disturbing for the smaller beasts in the distribution jungle. But it's the old-school businesses – the medium-sized

shops that have traditionally formed the backbone of the television distribution industry – that are likely to be the most affected by the market's changing dynamics. In the brave new world of content, buyers either want the volume, diversity and convenience offered by the distribution superstores, or the specialist support provided by the boutiques, with their niche expertise, personal relationships and flexible footprint. In this polarized scenario, that leaves the mid-range players with a few decisions to make.

For medium-sized distributors, the choice is to scale up or specialize. For producers, it's a similar monster-versus-minnow dilemma. If you're a big drama or format player, there's arguably more to gain by entrusting one of the powerhouse distributors with your product. With their global clout and A-list contacts, they have the machinery to give your show visibility, and probably earn you more money in the bargain.

But for small and medium-sized indies and creative start-ups, particularly those operating in the lower-risk/lower-reward factual entertainment space, the big guns can be... well, too big. The danger is that your incredible show about dogs, along with your self-respect and sanity, will be lost among hundreds of other shows about small furry animals. You may be better off with one of the newfangled distributor-cum-agents, who will give you specialist support, act as a commercial partner, introduce you to like-minded coproducers and broadcasters, and help you to unlock new revenue streams. Of course, they may simply do that old-fashioned thing of getting your show on air.

Today, a factual show has to work hard all over the schedule and most likely, across several platforms too.

Broadcasters tell us they want factual shows (they are no longer classified as "documentaries," incidentally, but "entertainment") that are big enough to act as schedule "tent poles," compelling enough to "break out of the genre," robust enough to "do a job" and edgy enough to "take a risk on a new slot." To deliver content of this caliber requires legs, grunt work and resilience, quite apart from a fresh and original angle, and impeccable production values. No wonder, then, that producers need a helping hand.

For a new-model distributor, that hand-holding can take several forms. In our case, there's the example of *Royal Secrets* (10 x 30 minutes), one of our headline acts for MIPCOM. The concept for the series, which delivers pretty much what it says on the tin, came out of a casual conversation with Simon Wood from archive specialist ITN Source and Charles Thompson from TTV Productions about the voracious global appetite for programming about the British Royals.

As a rule of thumb, any fact-ent programs with the words "royal" or "secret" in the title are almost guaranteed to sell, so we reckoned that combining the two would be an irresistible proposition. And because ITN Source has a flexible approach to the business and commercial aspects of archive licensing, TTV wouldn't have to stretch itself to pay for footage upfront, while we could put skin in the game via pre-sales. ITV, Foxtel Australia and Reelz instantly bought into the concept, and there are enough rights left for us to sell it around the world.

We took a different approach with another of our MIPCOM priorities, *Combat Trains*, which tells the military and human stories of the trains that changed history. History Channel devised the idea for the series with Woodcut Media, with considerable creative input from TCB. With a respected producer on board, plus knowing how well the military genre sells, it was a no-brainer for us to back the 8 x 60-minutes project to the hilt. History Channel UK commissioned it on the spot, while we started pulling in pre-sales from the likes of Discovery Nordic, Foxtel and RMC France.

Judging by the market's reaction to *Combat Trains* – we raised 80% of the budget via pre-sales, which is certainly a record for us – we expect it to do very well at MIPCOM. Or at least well enough to afford a beer at the Majestic. Maybe even two.

Paul Heaney is CEO and founder of boutique distributor TCB Media Rights, which specializes in factual, factual entertainment and formats. •



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(All photos by Rahoul Ghose)



a] Discovery Channel's Rich Ross

b] Leftfield Entertainment's Brent Montgomery

c] United Artists Media Group's Mark Burnett

d] Pilgrim Studios' Craig Piligian

e] Scripps Networks Interactive's Kathleen Finch

f] Endemol Shine Group's Eden Gaha

g] FremantleMedia North America's Gayle Gilman

h] William Morris Endeavor's Josh Pyatt

i] Renegade83's David Garfinkle

j] Monami Entertainment's Mona Scott-Young

k] NBC Entertainment's Meredith Ahr

l] A+E Networks' Paul Buccieri

m] History and H2's Paul Cabana

n] Profiles Television's Bertram van Munster

o] Peacock Productions' Sharon Scott

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